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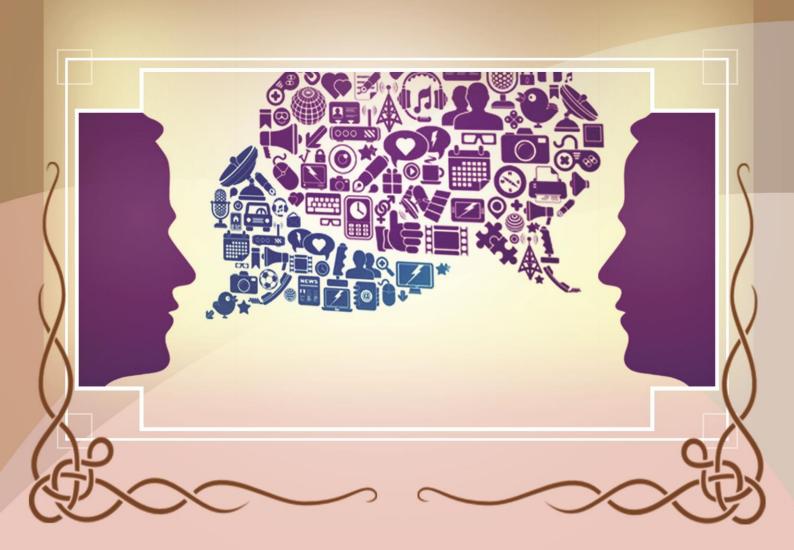**INDIRA GANDHI NATIONAL OPEN UNIVERSITY**
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CERTIFICATE IN COMMUNICATION SKILLS (CCS)

BASIC READING SKILLS

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Certificate in Communication Skill (CCS)

CCS-02
Reading Skills

Block – 1

Basic Reading Skills

UNIT-1	**Reading Skills**
UNIT-2	**Issues in Reading and Study Skills**

UNIT:1 READING SKILLS

Structure

1.0 OBJECTIVES

In this unit, we have attempted to make you aware of what 'reading' means in general and to locate its place in the process of distance education.

After working through this unit, you should be able to:

- Define 'reading'
- Identify the levels of 'reading';
- Teach SQ3R technique to your learners, dependents or friends, and adopt it effectively for your study purposes
- List the important reading comprehension skills
- Relate teaching of 'reading' to distance education.

1.1 INTRODUCTION

There is virtually no systematic teaching of reading skills either at the lower or at the higher levels of education. Consequent on this, learners suffer considerably at advanced levels. But many of us are not aware of the value attached to reading; and some of us tend to ignore the significance of teaching reading systematically. The primary reason for such attitudes, perhaps, is our naive concept of 'reading'. In this unit, therefore , we present the basic concept and the underlying theories of reading. Further, we try to establish that reading is not an unconscious use of a set of skills. Instead, good readers

use knowledge from a variety of sources to derive meaning embedded in the text, adjusting these derivations as they go along. Studies of learning theories have also shown that learners retain information over an extended period of time, if they are able to relate what they are reading to the materials which they have already read. Learners as active consumers of information' must have strategies to process, assimilate and accommodate information. , In other words, they should be able to relate new experiences to what they already know. No one can do this for the reader. Nevertheless, teachers can help facilitate reading and the instruction and putting together of meanings.

[1]

An attempt is made in this unit to demarcate the levels of reading---of course, with a' cautionary note that it is difficult to draw a fine boundary line between any two or more of them. Further, a complete section (2.6) is allocated to highlight the significance of 'reading' with reference to distance teaching/learning.

1.2   BASICS OF READING

Reading can be loosely defined as the ability to make sense of written or printed words. The reader uses the symbols to activate the information from his her memory and subsequently uses this information to arrive at a plausible interpretation of the writer's message.

However, it is easy to ignore how complicated this process is. For most people, reading is an automatic process and there is rarely any occasion for them to pause for a minute and consider what the process entails.

A skilled reader is normally able to identify any one of the words in his her repertoire in a fraction of a second. He/she can do this, despite the fact that the constituent letters are frequently represented by different shapes from one text to another-in the case of handwriting, from one instance of the letter to the next. He/she can even identify words which have been misprinted or misspelt. Accomplished readers can thus cope with the fact that many words have different meanings in different contexts. They can use this knowledge to unfold ambiguity and appreciate equivocations. They can combine the meanings of individual words to derive meanings of sentences and more extended passages of prose and poetry. This may involve them in drawing inferences, recalling relevant experiences, constructing images of scenes, and appreciating nuances of meaning.

Considering the fact that reading involves a number of processes, we cannot be content with the statement that reading is to decode printed or written words. It is necessary therefore to attempt to define reading-even though it is a difficult task.

1.2.1 Defining reading

Different people use the term 'reading' differently and much confusion can arise from the possible consequent misunderstanding. The term has a number of meanings. Since the meaning of the word on any particular occasion depends largely on the context in which it occurs, we should not therefore expect to find a single definition for reading.

A look at the range of reading styles will show the inadequacy of definitions, such as, 'reading is the identification of written words' or 'reading is the appreciation of the author's thoughts'. Neither of which, for example, would seem to apply to all the words we skip when we are trying to identify a number in a telephone directory.

Consider the following and say who, according to you, performs the act of reading.

- Amar is able to decode correctly all the words in a passage; however, he cannot however any questions on the passage.
- Beeni makes a number of mistakes in decoding words, but the mistakes which she makes do not seem to prevent her from answering any of the questions on the passage.
- Cinthia reads a passage on "Nuclear Weapons"- a subject about which she has very strong feelings. She has difficulty in answering the questions based on the passage of her attitude towards the theme of the passage.
- Durai can decode the words in the passage and he thinks that he knows the meanings of all the words. However, Durai cannot answer the questions on the passage.

Record your response in the space provided below:
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It is likely that you may have thought of words from at least one of the following groups to defend why you have chosen a particular person (of the four given above) as actually engaged in reading.

i)   understand, interpret, meaning, sense, etc.
ii)   decode, decipher, identify, etc.
iii)   articulate, speak, pronounce, etc.

(Or, perhaps you have thought of words connected with the ones given in the list above)

If you have used the ideas reflected in group (ii) you probably wanted to say that unless we correctly recognise the words we read in print, we cannot even begin to read. And, if you have used words similar to those in group (iii) you probably recollect your own experience both as a learner and a teacher. Whatever the reason for your reading of some materials, it is unlikely that you are interested in the pronunciation of what you read, expect in a tiny minority of cases. It is even less likely that you are interested in the grammatical structure used. You read, because you want to get something from the writing- facts, ideas, and enjoyment. Whatever it may be, you want to get the message that the writer has encoded. In other words, you are interested in what the messages in what the message means.

With this in view, if we look at the first group of words once again, we realize that it is the most important group of words.

Now probably you can say more confidently who among the four is actually reading.

Beeni is the only person who is actually reading because she is the only one who understands what she is reading. Although Amar can verbalise the words, he has no comprehension of them. Cinthia can also decode the words but her strong feelings about the topic have prevented her from getting the message which the writer has tried to convey. Durai can decode the words, and he knows the meanings of the individual words but he is either not able to get the sense of the whole passage or does not know the meaning of the words as used in the given context. We should mention here that we do not deny the significance of word-recognition for reading comprehension. However, word-recognition alone does not guarantee reading comprehension.

A broad definition that has been widely used and accepted is that reading is a process whereby a reader brings meaning to and gets meaning from print. (It, of course, applies to other media too.) This implies that readers bring their backgrounds, their experiences, as well as their emotions into play in order to derive meaning from a text. If we are in conversation with someone, we can stop him/her and ask for explanations whenever we need them. Similarly, when we have difficulties in reading, we need to interrogate the text. Since the writer is seldom available for consultation, the text is our

only reference; and reading can be, therefore, described as our active interrogation of or interaction with a text.

To elaborate, the message that a writer wants to convey does not merely lie in the text, waiting to be passively absorbed by the reader. Instead the reader with his/her background knowledge and experience breathes meaning into the text so as to tailor it into comprehensive chunks to suit his/her purpose. Thus, the reader is actively involved in getting the meaning out of a given text. Reading is thus an interactive process.

By putting together what has been said so far about reading, we may define it as a multifaceted and layered process in which a reader by actively interacting with the text, tries to decode what has been encoded by the writer/author. In the process he/she establishes a meaningful communication with the writer/author.

Check Your Progress 1

"Say why reading is seen as active interaction with the reading material. Your answer need not exceed 9 lines.

Notes: a) Space is given below for your answer.
       b) Check your answer with the one given at the end of this unit.

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1.2.2   Reading: an integrative process

By using a broad or global definition of reading, we are looking upon reading as a total integrative process that includes the following three domains of learning:

i) the cognitive;
 ii) The perceptual (note that here we are not talking about the psychomotor domain; recall Block 1, ES-312); and
iii) the affective,

We shall touch upon each of these domains in the given order.

The cognitive domain

When we say that a reader constantly interacts with a text to get the message of the writer, we imply that reading is an act of thinking. If a reader does not spend at least as much time in actively thinking about what he/she has read as he/she has spent in reading, he/she is simply insulting the author. Moreover, in such a case the reader, fails to gain optimum benefits from his/her reading. I

Learners who have difficulty in working at different levels of cognition will have difficulty in comprehending what they are reading. That is they cannot involve themselves in selecting, transforming, organising, and remembering information. If we look at the brain as an active consumer of information, able to interpret information and draw inferences from it as well as ignore some information and selectively attend to other information have difficulty in involve able to interpret information and draw inferences from it as well as ignore some information and selectively attend to other information, we give the learner an important active role and responsibility in learning from instruction. Readers have to, therefore, relate what they are reading to their past experiences, interpret information, infer meanings from it, ignore some information and attend to other relevant information.

The cognitive domain, thus, includes all the comprehension skills. Teachers can help learners in developing thinking skills by helping them acquire necessary strategies and by giving them in using these strategies.

The perceptual domain

The term 'perception' can be defined as giving meaning to sensations, or the ability to organise stimuli on a particular area. Our background, experiences and our sensory perceptors organise our stimuli. For example, if our eyes are defective then those perceptions involving sight would be distorted. And in the act of reading, visual perception is the most important factor as eye-movements influence and control what the reader perceives. The ability to organise stimuli on a particular area. Our back ground, experiences.

Generally, depending on how a learner perceives a word-as a whole or individual letters-he/she will be called either a good or a bad reader. (This once again depends largely on how we perceive reading.) The adult readers are able to perceive more complex and extensive graphic patterns as complete units. They are also able to give meaning to mutilated words.

Besides sensory perceptors, the perceptual process is also influenced by affective factors. If the reader, for example, is biased towards a topic, he/she deletes, adds to, or distorts what is being read.

The process of decoding the written words and interacting with the text depends mainly upon the following factors:

i) motivation-the attitudinal factor, the need to identify the unknown part or parts of a particular text/word;
ii) attention-as a powerful selector or stimulus;
iii) grouping of stimuli-recognisable syllables and other patterns for making optimum use of a limited span of attention;
iv) contrast-the contrastive letter patterns that represent contrastive sound patterns; and
v) feedback-a cyclic process ranging from the examination of letter groupings of the written word to the sounds of the spoken one; for example, the application of the skills of word-perception to the written word during silent reading.

The affective domain

This domain includes our feelings, emotions and attitudes. As mentioned earlier, the perceptual process is influenced by affective factors. For example, if we are angry and see the word 'food' we would perhaps read it as 'fool'. If we have adverse feelings about certain things, these feelings will influence how we interpret what we read. Our feelings also influence what we decide to read. (See page 21 where we said that Cinthia has

difficulty in answering questions on a subject about which she has strong feelings.) Obviously, attitudes exert a directive and dynamic influence on our readiness to respond to what we read.

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Check Your Progress 2

Substantiate, in not more than 10 lines, the statement 'reading is an integrative process'.

Notes: a) Space is given below for your answer.
          b) Compare your answer with the one given at the end of this unit.

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1.3 TAXONOMY OF READING

Before we discuss the topic under consideration in detail, we should mention here that one cannot ask such a straightforward question as to whether the process of reading necessarily entails comprehension, for the answer is that sometimes it does and sometimes it does not entail comprehension.

Let us give an illustration. If we suggest that someone should read a particular text, we obviously intend that he/she should comprehend it. It would be redundant to say that we wanted him to read and comprehend the book. But on the other hand, it would be quite reasonable for a learner to reply that he/she has already read the book but could

not comprehend it. We could not conclude that the learner did not read the book just because he/she did not comprehend it. However, we assume that reading subsumes comprehension. And so for our purpose, *taxonomy of reading or of reading Comprehension* would mean one and the same thing.

1.3.1 Barrett's taxonomy of reading comprehension

A number of taxonomies of reading comprehension exist and many appear to   be similar to one another. Perceived inadequacy of the earlier taxonomy or taxonomies prompts the development of a new one. As a result, different terminologies may be used for category headings, but descriptions of the categories may be kept unchanged. Most of the existing taxonomies are adaptations, in one way or other, of Bloom's taxonomy of educational objectives in the cognitive domain. Bloom's taxonomy is based on an ordered set of objectives ranging from the more simplistic skills to the more complex ones.

Of the many taxonomies which have tried to categorise reading comprehension, Barrett's taxonomy of reading comprehension is widely   accepted. Now, we shall talk about Barrett's taxonomy in some detail here:

This taxonomy consists of four categories. These are:
   i)   literal comprehension;
   ii)   inferential comprehension;
   iii)   evaluation; and
   iv)   appreciation

We shall touch upon each of these categories in the given order.

Literal comprehension

Literal comprehension requires the recognition or recall of information and happenings that are explicitly stated in the By implication, it requires the learner to locate or identify explicit statements in the reading material itself or in the exercises that use the explicit content from this material. And literal comprehension tasks demand that the learner produces from memory explicit statements from a given bit of reading matter.

Literal comprehension tasks may be looked down upon at high education. But the importance of these tasks cannot be denied as a learner's ability to deal with them is essential and fundamental to his/her ability to deal with other types of comprehension tasks. We should also mention here that all literal comprehension tasks are not

necessarily of equal difficulty. For example, the recognition of a single fact or incident may be somewhat easier than that of a number of facts and incidents. A more difficult task might be to recall a number of events or incidents and the sequence of their occurrence in a text.

Some samples of literal comprehension tasks are:

- recognition of details, main ideas, sequence, comparison;
- recognition of cause and effect relationship (i.e. the learner in this instance may be asked to identify or produce from memory reasons for certain incidents, events or a character's actions explicitly stated in the text);
- recognition of character traits (i.e. the learner may be asked to call up from memory statements about a character).

Inferential comprehension

The term 'inference' means something derived by reasoning-something, that is not directly stated but only suggested in the text. This may be a logical conclusive that is drawn from statements through deduction or induction.

Inferential comprehension is demonstrated by the learner when he/she successfully synthesise the content of the selected reading matter. His/her personal knowledge, and imagination are the bases for conjectures or hypotheses in such a case

Inferential tasks related to any narrative text (novels, for example) may - permit divergent or creative conjectures because of the open-ended possibilities provided by such writing. On the other hand, expository texts, more often than not, call for convergent hypotheses.

Examples of inferential tasks related to reading are:

- o inferring the main idea, supporting details, sequence, comparisons, cause and effect relationship, character traits;

- o inferring outcomes (i.e. the learner is required to read a part of the text and guess the outcome of the text);

- o inferring about figurative language (i.e. the learner may be asked to infer literal meanings from the author's figurative language);

o 'reading between the lines' or drawing general inferences.

Evaluation

Evaluation requires learners to make judgements about the content of their reading. Evaluation is demonstrated by a learner when he/she makes judgements about the content of a reading selection by comparing it with external criteria-information received from outside the text, his/her own experience and background, etc.

Examples of evaluation tasks related to reading are given below:

- judgements about reality or fantasy, facts or opinions;
- Judgements about appropriateness (i.e. the learner is required to determine whether or not certain chunks/parts of a text: are relevant to the development of the theme of the text etc.);
- judgement about worth, desirability and acceptability (i.e. the learner may be asked to comment on the suitability of a character's action in a particular incident or episode etc.).

Appreciation

Appreciation has to do chiefly with the learner's awareness of the literary techniques, forms, styles and structures employed by the author to stimulate   the   desired response. Obviously, tasks which fall into this category require varying degrees of inference and tasks is to heighten the learner's sensitivity and helps them to appreciate the techniques used by the author.

Examples of tasks that involve appreciation are:

- emotional response to a plot or theme;
- identification with characters and incidents;
- reaction to the author's use of language;
- sensitivity towards imagery, diction etc.

A word of caution

The tasks listed within each category should not be taken as discrete comprehension skills to be specifically developed. They should be viewed as examples of task that contribute to the development of general ability prompted by the category. Moreover,

the tasks listed are not exhaustive rather than they are only illustrative. You should keep in mind that the order of the categories in the taxonomy does not mean that one category will be always be more or less difficult than the other categories. Further, it is not always easy to distinguish between tasks of inference, evaluation and appreciation. Certainly, there is overlap among the categories. The primary criterion for placing a task in a particular category is the response the task intends to stimulate in the learners.

The taxonomy presented here intends to provide you with an understandable and manageable framework for planning, teaching, learning through reading, and evaluating in the area of reading comprehension. In general, this taxonomy can help teachers determine what reading materials they use or intend to emphasise with respect to comprehension. Further, it helps them to provide tasks that enable the learners to think and react in different ways when they read a text and to emphasise the comprehension ability or abilities that a given text can easily contribute to.

Check Your Progress 3

The following are the four different types of comprehension questions. Identify them with the appropriate categories.

    i)   Could we live without the sun? Explain. ,

    ii)   Name the seven kinds of energy p s b n t e d in this selection.

    iii)   Suppose we were able to harness the sun's energy efficiently, what do you think would be the consequence of this for humanity?

    iv)   What conclusions can you arrive at about the relationship between humanity and energy?

Notes: a) Space is given below for your answer.

        b) Compare your answer with the one given at the end of this unit.

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1.3.2 Stages in reading

Keeping Barrett's taxonomy of reading comprehension as a model, we have presented here the stages a reader systematically passes through in the process of reading, when he/she moves from lower to higher education.

The stages we have identified are:
- recognition of words;
- association of meaning with symbols;

- literal comprehension;
- interpretation;
- critical reading;
- creative reading.

Let us talk about each one of these in the given order.

Recognition of words

By word-recognition, we mean the ability to translate orally or subvocally the written symbol into a spoken word. No reading can take place without word-recognition.

A majority of learners will have mastered the skill of word-recognition by the time they come to higher education. The adult reader uses four clues to identify words which are not part of his/her instant recognition vocabulary--context clues, phonetic clues, structural clues and the clues from the dictionary. However, even at higher levels, learners need consistent review and practice of the principles and procedures necessary for ease in word-recognition. Problems with word-recognition may occur in any subject. For instance, quite often in sciences a reader is faced with a conglomeration of new words with unknown pronunciations. These words have to be read, understood and learned.

Association of meaning with symbols

The learner may readily pronounce 'gypsum' if he/she is familiar with a few phonetic principles, but the word may be just a mouthful of sounds and nothing more than that. Similarly a mathematical or scientific symbol often stands for a complex relationship, which may be as difficult to understand as abstract verbal symbols (say imperialism, irony etc.). When the learner comes across a new word and learns it, and then

recognises it in different contexts, we say he/she has learnt a new concept. Let us give an example. A word like 'approximation' is useful in Mathematics, English and Social Studies-in fact, a learner may come across it almost everywhere. There are also words which have both highly generalised and technical meanings. The word 'rational', for example, besides its general use, is used" in mathematics in a special sense. There are also words which have only the technical meaning, they often belong to one particular area. For example 'scoop' in journalism. Of course, with the passage of time such words also get generalised as they are used in more and more diverse contexts.

All the three types of words mentioned above have to be learnt because accurate communication takes place only when the writer/author and the reader (the learner) share a common understanding of the concept behind each symbol.

Literal Comprehension:

It-involves some very important sub-skills-reading for facts and central ideas, noting down supporting arguments etc. Various patterns of organisation of details produce different effects, though the facts themselves may be essentially the same ones. Learners, therefore, must learn not only to read for an accurate literal understanding of individual facts but also to understand the particular relationship these facts may have to other facts in the material.

Interpretation

Interpretation takes the reader beyond the printed page by requiring him/her to put together ideas which the author has not explicitly related to one another in the text. It also requires him/her to see the connections between what he/she is reading now and his/her past experience. As an outcome of this process, the reader is able to make inferences and draw conclusions. In other words, he/she learns to understand the implied meanings.
This process is at work in the reading required in all subject areas though with differing degrees of complexity.

Critical reading

The evaluation aspect of the reading act-often called critical reading-requires the reader to depart from the printed age in a different direction. At this stage, he/she makes judgements rooted in what he/she has read. His/her personal feelings and prejudices have little/ role to play, as he/she sorts out facts from opinions and evaluates the logic

of the reasoning presented in the material he/she has read. He/she considers the relevance, authenticity and utility of factual material. If the reader is working on a novel, he/she evaluates the logic of a character's behaviour in comparison with his/her own experiences or by his/her observation of characters in others works. In yet another novel the learner evaluate the style the author has used rather than the content and so on.

Creative reading

Creative reading uses divergent thinking skills to go beyond the literal comprehension, interpretation and critical reading levels. At this stage, the reader tries to come up with new or effective alternative ideas, solutions, etc. to those presented by the writer.

It is the process through which the reader makes use of his/her reading. Every act of reading potentially affects not only every other act of reading but also the non-reading acts which a learner will perform. The simplest, most direct way in which assimilation affects the learner is in the growing confidence he/she acquires in the use of the skills. These skills, at a certain stage, become so natural to him/her that he/she develops an automatic approach. When he/she needs to skim, he/she automatically does so. When he/she needs to read for complete recall, he/she does so. Thus he/she learns to assimilate skills, concepts, attitudes derived from reading. At this stage the reader comes to know how to get into a printed page, how to get what he/she wants from it, and how to get out of it when anymore time spent on it would be a waste.

The skills involved at the various stages of the reading act can be grouped into the following three categories:

- set purposes for reading, ability to survey material and determine an appropriate technique for the reading of any given piece of material;
- ability to handle graphic and illustrative materials;
- ability to locate, comprehend and combine information from a variety of library resources.

(These three categories have been touched upon in Unit 3).

Having given you a general perspective of various aspects of reading, we should also reinforce that reading can never be fully mastered by even the most competent of learners. As mentioned, the dispute as to whether or not reading entails comprehension depends upon how one interprets 'reading. To come to grips with the reading matter, the learner should activate some relevant reading comprehension skills. In the

following section, we shall look into some of the basic skills which the learners require to understand the subject matter better.

1.4   READING: SQ3R TECHNIQUE

It is customary to give the learners a lengthy reading list at the beginning of every term. Clearly, they cannot afford to spend time to read everything. Moreover, different texts require different approaches, depending on what the learners are expected to get from them. The learners may need to read some books in parts, some fully from cover to cover but not necessarily carefully, and a few diligently and with attention. The implication here is that the strategy should be flexible in tackling text materials. One strategy that gained wide acceptance is the SQ3R technique. Here we shall write about this technique in detail.

'SQ3R' stands for the initial letters of the five steps that should be taken in studying a text: The five steps are: ~

i)   Survey
ii)   Question
iii)   Read
iv)   Review

We shall discuss each one of these steps in the given order.

Survey

It refers to a quick glance through the title page, preface, chapter headings, etc., of a text. Surveying a text helps the learners grasp the main ideas.-A glance   at the title page may give you:

i)   the general subject area;
ii)   the level of approach;
iii)   the author's name; and
iv)   the date and place of publication.

Naturally, a preface will give you more details. It helps you decide whether or not the book deserves your attention. The table of contents is yet another source you should never ignore when making a preliminary survey. A quick survey of the 'contents' tells you what topics the author is dealing with and how he/she has organised the themes.

A survey of the index will tell you instantly or not the text contains what you need. It also helps you save time and effort by directing you straight to the most relevant pages.

Question

Your survey of the text will raise some questions in your mind-general ones, though. For example, after glancing at the title page,preface contents, you might ask yourself:

- How far can I depend on this book?
- Will the book be helpful to me as its preface suggests ?
- Why should the author devote a whole chapter to this or that topic ?

Even these general questions are of some help to you in deciding how to treat the book.

Of course, when you turn from surveying the book as a whole to specific chapter/topic, your questions will become more specific. At times, the author himself/herself will pose questions at the beginning or end of the chapter. Since questions are generally more helpful if given at the beginning of a chapter, it is always better to take note of these end of chapter questions during a survey. Learners, unfortunately tend to overlook the author's questions and thereby pass by a very helpful guide to effective reading.

Having made your survey and started to question, you are now ready for the third step in the SQ3R technique-reading the text.

Read

Reading text material demands a critical mind. That is, when we read a text we apply our minds with all their critical skills. Unless we read 'actively the questions which have been formulated can never be answered satisfactorily.

Two important suggestions should be 1isted.here:

i)It is not advisable to make notes at this stage. We may tend to note down the author's opinions/words rather than our own. This does not help understanding and learning.

ii)This is not the stage to underline words or phrases either. For, in our second reading we may find that whichever words/phrases have been underlined are not very critical for our purpose.

Keeping these two points in view, what we should do at the first reading is just to look for the main ideas and the supporting details.

Recall

Reading a text is not the final step in learning. It is, instead, the first step in learning. What is read needs to be recalled for retention? Regular attempts to recall will help improve your learning in three ways-help improve concentration, give you a chance to remedy misinterpretation(s) and develop critical reading.

How often to recall?

This is a pertinent question. But 'how often' chiefly depends on 'how good' a reader you are.

Review

The purpose of reviewing is to check the validity of our recall. The best way to do this is to do a quick repeat of the other four steps-survey, question, read and recall.

Check Your Progress 4

Suppose that you are teaching SQ3R technique to your learners. Say, in about 10 lines, whether you would ask your learners to strictly follow the logical order in which SQ3R is presented. Substantiate your answer.

Notes: a) Space is giver1 below for your answer.
      b) Check your answer with the one given at the end of this unit.

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1.5 TEACHING READING COMPREHENSION SKILLS

Because reading in itself has no inherent, fixed subject reader reads constitutes the practice of reading-whether he/she is reading a newspaper, a menu, a journal, a road map or a text book, the efficiency his/her reading depends greatly upon:

- His/her basic reading skills
- His/her experiences in the area in which he/she is reading
- His/her interest in the material
- His/her purpose(s) of reading; and
- The level of difficulty of the material.

This section presents some important reading comprehension skills which the teachers-no matter whether they are subject teachers or language teachers –should teach in order that the learners may become mature readers.

Before we begin the discussion, we want to make it clear ,"that the skills that we shall be talking about are not confined just to classroom teaching. Instead, they pertain to all learners-all readers. The implication is that distance learners also need these essential skills to become ~successful in their academic pursuits. In fact, a distance learner needs them more than anybody else, as he/she entirely or mostly on reading.

Now let us talk about the essential reading comprehension s.

Finding the main/central idea

To find the main idea in a paragraph, readers must find what common elements the sentences share. Some writers place the main idea as the sentence presenting the topic and may put the topic title in bold print. However, in literature for example, this is not the common practice-the main idea may not be stated directly but implied. In such situations, the reader has to find it from the clues provided by the writer.

There is no fool proof method for finding the main idea. However, a common suggestion is that the reader/learner should first determine what the theme of the paragraph is and then find out what in particular(special/unique) the author is trying to say about it. Once he/she does learner must be able to locate the main idea.

We generally use the term central idea rather than main idea when we refer to a group of paragraphs, a story etc. To find out the central idea, the introductory paragraph is usually helpful because it either contains or anticipates what the central idea is and how it will be developed.

Reading between the lines

Many writers do not directly state what they mean but present ideas in a more indirect, roundabout way. That is why the ability to infer is called the ability to read between the lines. Mystery writers find inference essential to the maintenance of suspense in their stories.

For example, stories by Sherlock Holmes and Perry Mason are based essentially on the ability of the characters to uncover evidence in the form of clues that are not obvious to the others around them.

Textbook writers, however, present information in a more straightforward ' manner than fiction writers do, yet most texts include implied meanings that readers must deduce or infer. For example, when learners read about the actions and decisions of some important persons in history, they can deduce something about their characters. When learners read about North Pole they can infer the kind of clothes the people have to wear, as well as the kind of life they have to lead there. Good readers, while reading, try to gather clues to draw inferences about what they read. Although accomplished readers do this whenever they read, they are not usually aware of it.

Asking key questions about the material which the learners are reading will encourage them to draw inferences from what they are reading. They should also be asked to supply data to substantiate their inferences. Another technique the teacher could use would be to present certain statements to the learners concerning what they have read and ask them to determine whether the statements are true or false. This technique can be used at all levels of learning with varying degrees of complexity.

Categorising

The ability to divide items into categories is a very important reading skill and one that is necessary for developing concepts. A learner's progress through standards/levels, they should develop the skii1of categorising. The learners 'should be able to differentiate and group items into more complex categories, they should also be able to proceed from more generalised classification to more specialised classifications. Let us give an illustration.

Given a set of words, the learners should be able to see what they have in common and identify a word which does not fit into the set. (Even at higher levels of learning, this practice is often followed and found useful.)

Example
Identify the word in each set of words given below which does not belong to the set.

i)   frogs, snakes, turtles, lizards

ii)   mean, median, mode, range

iii)   kilometer, decimeter, centimeter, lactometer

Learners who have difficulty in classification Fill usually have difficulty working with analogies. Teachers could use analogy activities to teach and test learners understanding of concepts in particular areas .

For example,
i)   Rock is to geologist as bird is to (ornithologist).

ii)   Distance is to odometer as direction is to (compass).

iii)   One is to thousand as meter is to (kilometer).

These activities could be made easier by supplying a order list from which learners can choose appropriate answers.

Distinguishing between fact and opinion

The ability to differentiate between facts and opinions is a very useful skill for critical reading which learners need to develop.

Teachers should help their learners to recognise that everything that they read is not necessarily true or correct. If the learners read something that does not make sense even if it is in a textbook written by an authority in the field, they should be able to question it.

Besides, the learners should be helped to detect the presence of propaganda or bias in what they read. This is another essential critical reading skill.

Creative reading

It involves divergent thinking. Good readers are able to look beyond the obvious and come up with new or alternative solutions. To develop this skill in the learners, they should be encouraged to try to solve problems in many different ways and try to be intelligent risk-takers, or to make educated guesses.

Brainstorming, i.e., generating many different ideas without inhibition, is a technique that has been popularised in business and industry. Teachers can use this technique very effectively to help stretch learners' imagination. It is an excellent way to break the ice among learners at any level. Certain principles adopted for effective brainstorming are:

i)   anything goes;
ii)   no criticisms/comments; and
iii) build on other's ideas.

1.6 READING AND DISTANCE LEARNING

Notwithstanding the fact that distance learners are mostly adults and most of them know how to read, we feel that a special mention of reading in the context of distance teaching and learning is essential. Like any other learner, the distance learner also spends much of his/her time in reading. By implication, our discussion on reading should not be construed as relevant only in the classroom situation. In fact, the distance learner's dependence on reading is more than that of his/her counterpart in the classroom. Unlike the learner in the formal set up, the distance learner's access to teacher(s) is limited. Consequently, he/she has to, most of the time, depend upon the course materials-print and other media.

The distance teaching materials, by and large, are conversational in style. This helps the learners feel that they are interacting with the writer and questioning the text. The materials also provide questions-polemic or rhetoric-at crucial junctures to help raise further questions in the learners.

In doing so, the learners come to grips with the subject. Besides, the questions set in the self-check exercises take the stages of reading   comprehension. That is, some exercises require the learners to infer ideas from the text, but some others may demand the learner's reaction to what is presented in the text

.

Advanced organisers – introduction, statement of aims, objectives, etc.-also help the learners set themselves the purpose of reading. For example, aims and objectives would present what the text contains and what the text expects from the learners. Glossaries are provided wherever necessary to ensure easy and better comprehension of the text. Distance teaching materials, thus, are designed in such a way as to help improve the reading skills of the learners.

Distance teaching system also requires learn from effectively read and learners from tutor-comments. (We have discussed the significance of tutor-comments in Block 3 of this course.) Here, however, we shall give some important types of comments that help learners read and learn more effectively. These are:

- comments which acknowledge the learner's point of view;
- comments which suggest new ideas, different examples , etc.;
- comments aimed at helping the learners make their written expressions clearer;
- comments guiding the learner to the proper use of evidence/reference;
- comments which evaluate the learner's work as a whole (explaining a grade/mark etc-comments relating the piece of work under consideration to past and future assignments
- comments offering plenty of explanations to make sure that the learners understand the rules of marking and grading;
- comments asking quite specific questions and encouraging the learners to reply regularly
- comments asking learners to evaluate their own work and send in their evaluation notes with the work itself;
- comments making a positive effort to help the learner realise the value of assignments as reading and writing exercises.

Further, all comments should end with an invitation to ask for further explanations.
(A detailed description of how distance teaching materials help develop
reading and study skills of the learners is presented in Unit 3 of this block.)

1.7 LET US SUM UP

In this unit, we learnt that ~

Reading is an integrative process and it is difficult to give a single definition of reading;

- Barrett's taxonomy of reading comprehension has four categories-literal comprehension, inferential comprehension, evaluation and appreciation;

- reading subsumes comprehension;

- it is necessary to expose the learners to essential reading skills;
- the discussion of reading is not confined to classroom teaching only, as it is highly relevant to distance teaching/learning too;
- the questions built in the text help the learners assimilate what they are reading and relate it to what they have already read. These built in questions function as catalysts.
- Besides, we discussed SQ3R technique-survey, question, read, recall and review.

Check Your Progress: Possible Answers

1

When we read a text, whatever it may be, we do not passively absorb what is given in it. We normally interact with it actively and breathe meaning into the words to get the writer's message. Hence, reading is defined as active interaction with the text.

2

When we read we integrate the three domains--cognitive, perceptual and affective. That is, when we read we select, transform, organise, remember and react to the information available in the reading material in accordance with our attitudes and needs. Further, when we read, our experiences and sensory perceptors organise our responses. Eye movements, for example, influence And control what we perceive from the text. As all the three domains are activated during the process of reading, it is considered an integrative process.

3

 i) Evaluation (creative)
 ii) Literal comprehension
 iii) Appreciation
 iv) Inferential comprehension (interpretative) Note that overlapping of categories is possible.

4

Although the steps of SQ3R are in the logical and natural order, there may be overlappings and repetitions among them. For instance, even while the emphasis is on survey or reading we may still be asking questions or we may want to interrupt the third step (i.e. read) for the purpose of recalling and review or even for the purpose of repeating our survey. (Nevertheless, there is no harm in explaining SQ3R in the order of symbols S.Q. etc.)

5
Topic: Writer's pattern of life.

What is special about the topic: Writer's pattern of life difficult to change.
Main Idea: The writer feels that it is difficult to change one's pattern of life.
6
Good readers are able to:

i)   do inferential reasoning;

ii)   state the main/central ideas available in a given piece of information;

iii)   assimilate and categorise information;   ~

iv)   make analogies, analyse, synthesise and/ evaluate
        information;   I

v)   think beyond the obvious message communicated by what is
        read.

UNIT: 2   ISSUES IN READING AND STUDY SKILLS

Structure

2.0   INTRODUCTION

Almost every activity performed, even the simple ones that are performed daily with almost little or no effort and attention require certain skills that have been acquired at some point of our life. Most of these skills are acquired through the socialization process. A child passes the early years of his/her life at home where his/her family usually teaches these skills. Later s h e starts going to school where the teachers take over this responsibility. However, as a person grows older, s/he cannot be taught every skill by his/her family and teachers, as we cannot be taught everything, we are expected to learn certain things on our own. Whether, it is the acquisition of skills or acquiring knowledge, we cannot always acquire them with the help of family and teachers. After a certain point we have to engage in self-learning to develop skills and acquire knowledge. This is a lifelong process.

Interestingly, reading and studying, which help us in acquisition of many types of skills and acquiring knowledge, are in themselves. Basic skills that have to be acquired. Even many adults do not possess the required proficiency in these matters. Reading with reasonable speed and comprehension can be a challenging task for many. Again, self-study requires a strategic approach otherwise managing self-study and performing it effectively may not be possible. In the present unit we are going to study these skills in details.

2.1   OBJECTIVES

After studying this unit, you should be able to:
- understand the nature and types of reading skills;
- appreciate the benefits of Barrett's taxonomy of reading comprehension;
- discuss the way to improve the reading skills;
- define meaning and nature of study skills; and
- Explain the study skills strategies.

2.2   NATURE OF SKILLS

As mentioned earlier, this unit is devoted to reading and study skills. But what is a skill? Before we proceed to the development of skills related to reading and studying, we shall discuss in this section, the meaning of 'skills'. Skills could be academic like reading, writing, studying, calculating, etc. There are also other type of skills such as musical skills, dancing, playing an instrument, playing a game, cooking, etc. A skill is thus the ability to perform an activity or a series of activities comprising a task well. Interestingly, most of the fields of knowledge have one or more pioneers who, on the basis of various studies and explorations, promulgate sound and strong ideas, which could be accepted and treated as dogma. Although the field of skills lacks such a great pioneer (Irion, 1966), it is suggested by Welford (1962) that Bessel (an astronomer) could be given due credit for beginning the scientific study of skills. It is believed that for the first time, Bessel during the 1820s carried out studies on skills on himself and his colleagues. Welford suggested that this could be treated as the beginning of scientific explorations into the field of skill learning.

As far as the definition and nature of skills are concerned, there are three major characteristics of a skill. A skill consists of the following:
- response chains,
- eye-hand coordination, and
- The organisation of S-R (stimulus -response) chains into complex response patterns.

Response Chains: Have you ever noticed that majority of the skills are exhibited through some motor responses or muscular movements? Further these motor responses are a product of stimulus - response (S-R) association and may also involve cognitive processes like thinking, analysing, etc. This can be demonstrated by Gagne's (1965) illustration of a car driver who intends to start a car. Gagne has minutely dissected this process: when you wish to start the engine of your car (S), you look carefully at the road (R), when you find the road clear (S), you test whether the car is in neutral gear (R), when you find the gear in neutral (S), you turn the key to activate the starter (R), and so on.. .. Note that your responses in this example are muscular movements which involve the use of eyes, arms, legs, fingers, etc.

Secondly, skilled behaviour also consists of good coordination between hands and eye movements (Bilodeau and Bilodeau, 1961). For example, batting in the cricket game is such a behaviour that requires good perceptual-motor skills. Thirdly, skilled behaviour is the organisation and application of S-R chains into complex and larger response patterns. Piloting a plane, working on a computer, typewriting skills, etc. are good examples of it which require a number of discrete actions instead of some single unitary act.

Here is one more pertinent issue regarding the study of skills which relates to the classification of the skills. Fitts (1962, 1964) classified the skills on the basis of constancy - i.e. uniformity found in the highly skilled behaviours. Constancies, which differ in their levels of complexity, can be conceived of in terms of the movements made by body during skill performance. Fitts (1962) suggests that, at the lowest level of complexity, the body is in the resting position while you perform a skill like threading a needle. Here the external object is fixed in relation to which you perform some skilled behaviour. At a more complex level of constancy, you perform a skill when your body is in motion and the targets (external) objects are' fixed as for example running to bowl in cricket; where initially the body is not in motion but is required to be 111 motion at a later stage. For example, a shooter might be required to shoot at a moving target.

Lastly, at the most complex level, both the body as well as the external objects are in motion, as in polo game.

Here, would you like to comment on the chess game where both the players' body as well as the objects are comparatively motionless yet the game requires highly skilled performance to win. So, in addition to gross body movements, skilled behaviour can

also be classified in terms of certain S-R chain properties like coherence, continuity, and complexity. Coherence of the chains refers to the degree of dependence of successive responses. Swimming is less coherent than playing some musical instrument. Continuity refers to the degree to which the skilled responses are continuous. Controlling and balancing the steering wheel of a car shows continuity whereas batting in the cricket game is a discrete task. Lastly, the complexity of the S-R chains is determined by the variety of different stimuli and responses possible at a given time. Hence, learning the Ludo game is less complex than chess. Playing chess is not only dependent on the stimulus provided by the opponent but also on a variety of available possible response moves of the player. Although, apparently the body seems to be in resting position, the mind is performing very rapid calculations. On the basis of these calculations one responds to the moves of the opponent which, s h e believes, could lead to victory. So, instead of motor skills, this complex game requires high cognitive skills.

That's why, in the learning of complex skills, the role of cognition has been duly identified by Fitts (1962) along with fixation and the autonomous phase. In the cognitive phase, a person tries to analyze, verbalize and thus intellectualize the skills s/he is required to perform, whereas in the fixation phase, s/he practices the correct response patterns until the mistakes are reduced to a minimum, and the skilled response becomes fixated. Lastly, in the autonomous phase, s/he attempts to increase the speed of skilled performance with remarkable accuracy and committing very little or no mistakes at all. This phase is very well exhibited by the experts of the field where they show the skilled performance as a natural behaviour. This stage is achieved by the continued practice over along time. Moreover, as you have learned in the previous units, feedback, besides practice, also plays an important role in the learning of skills.

2.3 LEARNING FROM PRINT: READING SKILLS

Reading is the process whereby a reader brings meaning to and gets meaning from print or any other media. During the process of reading the readers bring their background, their experiences, and emotions into play in order to derive meaning from a text i.e., reading is the reader's active interrogation of or interaction with a text. In short reading is an integrative process that includes the cognitive, perceptual and affective domains of learning

2.3.1 Nature and Types
Here nature refers to the essential qualities or characters of reading. In this unit we shall discuss mainly the reading of text and not of other forms such as pictogram, musical notations, etc. The nature of reading is explained by two prominent theories:

1. Gibson and Levin (1975): principle of perceptual development or theory of information pick up.
2. Resnick and Weaver (1979): theory of letter- sound correspondence and semantic-linguistic aspects.

Gibson and Levin (1975) stress the way in which a beginner and mature reader reads. Their views outline a theory of reading based on principles of perceptual development including the following major tasks:

- distinctive features,
- invariant relations in events,
- higher order structures,
- abstraction,
- ignoring irrelevant information,
- peripheral mechanisms, and
- reduction of uncertainty.

Thus the learner while reading carries out several tasks like, noting the distinct features present in the text, understanding the relation among events, dealing with complex structures involved, understanding abstractions, etc. and finally being sure of the message that the writer wanted to convey.

According to Resnick and Weaver (1979), reading depends upon letter- sound correspondence with increasing importance upon semantic linguistic aspects over time. The various aspects associated with learning to read include:
- significance of decoding,
- the nature of reading skills,
- the relationship between reading and language,
- factors that integrate with learning to read, and
- the acquisition of reading competence.

As far as types of reading are concerned, you can note that generally reading is done
- either for enjoyment or for learning
- either by glance or by in -depth concentration
- either at a great speed or at an optimum speed

Thus reading integrates processes that are cognitive such as comprehension, dealing with abstractions, perception of the meaning and also sometimes the hidden intentions of the writer. It also has an affective connotation i.e. one may experience emotional

changes while reading. Reading with comprehension is aided by techniques such as locating the central theme whenever possible, inferring about the content read, reflecting upon it, etc.

2.3.2 Barrett's Taxonomy of Reading Comprehension

Many times we find it difficult to understand and assimilate i.e. 'to comprehend' after reading the particular text. However, we may assume that reading subsumes comprehension. The term "taxonomy of reading" or "taxonomy of reading comprehension" means the same thing. The most widely accepted taxonomy is the Barrett's taxonomy of reading comprehension. Nov, let us discuss Barrett's taxonomy in details. The four categories of Barrett's taxonomy are:

Literal Comprehension or Literal Recognition (Recall)

It emphasizes the recognition or recall of ideas, information and happenings that are clearly/vividly stated in the materials to be read. Literal comprehension consists of the following six crucial aspects:

- Recognition or Recall of Details: where the reader can locate or identify or call up from memory the names of characters or a narration given in the text.
- Recognition or Recall of Sequence: where the reader can recognize or recall the order of events or actions in the text.
- Recognition or Recall of comparisons: where the reader can identify the likeness and differences in the text.
- Recognition or Recall of Cause and Effect Relationship: where the reader can identify causes and consequences mentioned in the text.
- Recognition or Recall of Character Traits; where the reader can highlight the traits of a character.

Inferential Comprehension: Inferential Comprehension refers to the logical conclusion - drawn from statements through deduction or induction. This is demonstrated when, a student successfully synthesizes the content of the selected reading matter. His/her personal knowledge, intuitions and imagination are the bases for conjectures or hypotheses formed after reading. The six steps of literal comprehension given above can be inferred besides inferring figurative languages and predicting outcomes.

Evaluation : Evaluation refers to the judgments made by the reader about the content of their reading by comparing the same with external criteria like information provided

by the teacher, or by experts or by renowned writers or by authentic sources on the world-wide-web on the subject. Evaluation tasks related to reading are judgments about reality or fantasy, facts or opinions, or appropriateness or worth, desirability and acceptability or appropriateness

Appreciation: Appreciation involves the reader's awareness of the literary techniques, forms, styles and structures employed by the author to stimulate emotion. This requires varying degrees of inference and evaluation with the reader's sensitivity to appreciate the technique used by the author, as the task that involves appreciation are emotional responses to a plot or theme; identification with characters and incidents, reaction to the author's use of language; sensitivity towards imagery, etc.

An understanding of this taxonomy can be helpful in comprehending, evaluating and finally enjoying a well written material in the print medium.

After this discussion on Barrett's taxonomy of reading comprehension let us describe the methods of improving reading skills.

2.3.3 Improving Reading Skills: SQ3R

In the year 1961, Francis Robinson put forth the SQ3R system (designated by the initials S-Q-R-R-R, standing for survey, question, read, recite, and review) after consciously incorporating several aspects of the learning theory. SQ3R system guides the reader to activate his background knowledge on the subject; formulate questions to stimulate curiosity and stay focused; participate in deep information processing necessary for comprehension and recall; monitor comprehension and test readiness. There are five steps in this system namely survey, question, read, recite and review. Now let us discuss these steps in brief.

- **Survey:** This refers to a quick browsing of the title page, preface, chapter headings and sub-headings, graphical aids, introduction, summary, conclusion, terms or phrases in italics, bold face print, end-of chapter questions. Thus 'survey' enables one to *gather the information necessary to focus and formulate goals.*

- **Question:** This task helps one to engage his /her mind and concentrate on the text. The questions raised directly affect the ease with which the text can be comprehended. Survey of the text leads to questions. The questions posed by the authors and the end-of-chapter questions also serve as a mean of effective

- **Read:** This refers to active reading. Unless the reader reads 'actively' the questions which have been formulated s/he can never satisfactorily attain learning. So, it helps to fill in the information around the mental structures one has been building during the process of 'survey'. Reading the text is the first step in learning.

- **Recite:** Refers to recalling the content read them from memory. Recitation helps to get the things read retained. Frequent recall helps improve concentration, chance to remedy misinterpretation(s) and develop critical reading.

- **Review:** This is done through the four above mentioned steps i.e. survey, question, read and recite. Review helps to check the validity of recall and confirms whether the passage has to be reread. Review enables to refine the organization and building of memory.

This SQ3R strategy is highly beneficial in reducing your reading and studying time, it enhances your concentration during reading, and helps, you recall the important points and key information later.

Check Your Progress 1
Answer the following questions briefly:
1. What is the basic purpose of reading?
....
....
....
....
2. What are the three domains of reading?
....
....
....
....
3. Among the different activities of SQ3R. which one would imply comprehension in true sense?
....
....
....

Many learners are of the view that their memory is poor and that they cannot recall the material read. However, it may not be the case. Their memory might not be poor but their reading style might be faulty. For example, most students open their books and read till the end of the chapter. Here it is questionable whether they really read the text. Because the input itself was not proper and they really did not transfer the material from the pages to their mind, how could they expect that *effective output* should be there?

Besides the above-discussed SQ3R system of improving reading skills, there are some other techniques which can help you learn faster and effectively. Some of these are as follows:

- Read the material more often, even if it is for a short time. Even a half an hour reading (with full interest and concentration) can get you the maximum advantage of your reading.
- Read group of words at a time. Do not read single words because they have little meaning. Reading meaningful phrases will fasten your speed and comprehension.
- Don't mouth the words. Remember your mind is many times faster than your mouth. So, use your mind in reading instead of your mouth.
- Establish a context. Do not go through passively all through the beginning till end. Read actively and establish contexts by thinking over what has been presented to you.
- Set goals for yourself and answer the questions. Make your list of questions including those given at the e-.l of the unit and those framed by turning headings into questions. Try to answer these. Wherever in the text, you find the answers to questions write your questions in the margins opposite to these.
- Highlight and underline important points, and take notes. While going through your text, you will find many important points to remember. Underline these. Take notes of these in the side margins. Later go through these points periodically. You should regularly review the material.
- There is a very close relationship between reading speed and understanding. You will be surprised to note that word-by-word analysis (or word reading) inhibits your understanding and breaks reading speed. At the same time, reading speedily without actual understanding also leads to no improvement. So, practise reading speedily without lowering actual understanding and comprehension.

2.4 STUDY SKILLS

Now let us read about study skills. Try to follow the SQ3R approach while reading this section and deliberate upon its impact on your learning. Study skills are the skills or strategies that a learner employs to study an.' come to grip with the study material independently and efficiently.

2.4.1 Meaning and Nature

Study skills are either *strategies* to be developed by a learner to derive the greatest possible benefit from activities like listening, speaking, reading, writing, or *advance skills* which are not purely mechanical but require active mental exercise on the part of the learner. As far as the types of study skills are concerned, it is difficult to specify categories of all the skills that a learner uses either to get across his/her message or to decode someone's message. In essence, it is difficult to prepare an exclusive list of study skills. It involves understanding the content, thinking about it critically, analyzing it, summarizing it and thus dealing with the information effectively.

2.4.2 Study Skills Strategies

Study skills strategies are the commonly adapted methods to ensure effective studying. Let us see the main study skill strategies usually practiced by most learners:
- **Note taking:** Notes can be taken either during lectures or after reading a text. Such organized notes serve as a permanent record which helps learner to remember the major and important points easily. Some of the essential aspects of note taking are:
  - o Recording (the information, only relevant portions)
  - o Reducing (the information, on111relevant portions)
  - o Reciting (recalling the information)
  - o Reflecting (on the information)
- **Reviewing** (going through the information critically again)
- **Non-verbal aids:** Studying the illustrations, diagrams, charts, tables, etc. enables one to study faster. In addition, interpretation of the content can also be done easily.
- **Sum-ups or summary:** Writing the precis of the chapter learnt and presenting it in point-wise manner facilitates studying.
- **Use of color/ underlining:** While reading a text, use of color to underline the key points helps to highlight difficult and significant points. Underlining also helps the learners to grasp the meaning from the text and to locate the main ideas.

- **Quiet and disturbance-free environment**: Set a comfortable place for study and study only. If noise, music and people disturb you, avoid them, if possible. If not possible, habituate yourself to reading and studying in that environment, and you will find yourself able to concentrate there too.
- **Setting goals for the self-study:** Before beginning to study, set a goal for yourself, record the expected time to finish and actual time taken to finish the assignment. This step has been reported to be highly effective in guiding your

- **Preferably, set small and short-range** goal for yourself: Dividing your text into subsections (or whole into parts) can do this. However, you should prepare a flexible schedule in which you have some time for friends, family, and entertainment also.

- **Setting studying time**: Set a fixed time to begin studying. It is found that certain behaviours are conditioned with certain times of the day, and are performed successfully if taken well care of the habituated time. Also, just before study time, do not start some other, time-consuming business.

- **Develop interest, motivation, and concentration**: Whenever you find your mind wandering, close your book and quit studying for a while. After a short period, you might again be able to concentrate on your text.

- **Reward yourself on achieving your ,goal**, You may recall what you had read about operant conditioning in an earlier unit. Positive reinforcement ensures you the reoccurrence of the desired behaviour in future. So, when you use your study time effectively, and achieve the goals successfully, reward yourself with some time for entertainment (watching TV for me time, or talking to a friend. Use this time the way you like as positive reinforcement.

Activity

Apply the skills just discussed while you read this unit and critically evaluate their , effectiveness.

2.5 IMPLICATIONS FOR PRINT MATERIAL DEVELOPMENT

So far we have seen in brief the meaning and nature of reading and study skills. You might have wondered why the knowledge of these is essential for a student of educational technology. It is inevitable because the reading and study skills have both direct and indirect implications for print material development.

While developing the material in order to optimize the reading and study skills of the learners, care should be taken to:

- Have differences in font size for the headings/sub headings and running text.
- Use nonverbal aids such as the use of italics, bold letters,etc: admist the running text so that the reader can grasp and interpret the content with care.
- Provide summary at the end of the unit so that the crux of the chapter is available in a nutshell.

- Furnish important points in boxes so that the reader can read and remind himself of the main point in that chapter.
- Leave wide margins at the left for notes.
- Include questions and activities that induce reflection.

Check Your Progress2

Answer the following questions briefly:

1. Suggest some techniques to improve reading skills.
   …………………………………………………………………………………
   …………………………………………………………………………………
   …………………………………………………………………………………

2. Why is it important to develop study skills?
   …………………………………………………………………………………
   …………………………………………………………………………………
   …………………………………………………………………………………

3. Suggest how self-learning materials are to be designed to promote reading skills.
   …………………………………………………………………………………
   …………………………………………………………………………………
   …………………………………………………………………………………

2.6 SUMMARY

In the present unit you have come across a number of strategies for effective reading and studying. You now know the importance of reading skills and studying goals, using SQ3R strategy, taking notes, underlining important words and sentences, preparing summary, properly scheduling your time, and rewarding yourself on successful achievement of the goals. Remember that there is no such fool proof strategy that is free of hurdles, and your practical reading and studying will face a lot of uninvited difficulties. Whenever you start using these strategies discussed above or new ones developed by yourself, ensure enough flexibility in your approach to reading and studying. Whatever approach you follow and apply your ultimate aim should be to improve your study skills.

2.7   UNIT END ACTIVITIES

- Apply Barrett's taxonomy to read a unit from this course and make a report on your learning experiences.

- Apply any of the techniques of reading besides SQ3R, mentioned in the unit, for reading any two sections of the next unit and critically evaluate its effectiveness. Apply also the study skills while you study that unit. Prepare a report on it.

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2.9   CLUES TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Check Your Progress 1

1.   Comprehension
2.   Cognitive, perceptual &affective
3.   Review i.e. reflect over the material read.

Check Your Progress 2

1.   Read the content often, read actively, highlight important points, etc.
2.   For remaining motivated and studying effectively more in lesser time.
3.   Advanced organizers, headings, subheadings, glossaries, etc. help learners to read effectively.

NOTES