



What Makes Reading Difficult for EAL Students? Strategies for Struggling Readers



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Overview

1. What is Reading?
2. What Makes Reading Difficult?
3. Reading Skills and Strategies
4. Strategies for Instruction

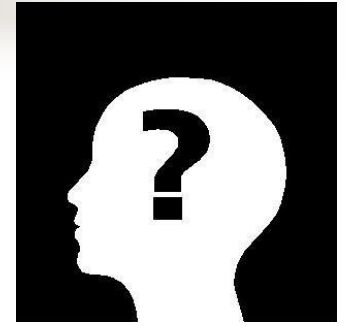
Teaching Experience

How many of you are

- primary teachers?
- secondary teachers?
- principals or program administrators?
- EAs?
- content area teachers who teach EAL students in your classes?
- academics?
- other?

What is Reading?

Please jot down your own definition.



Definition of Reading

“Reading is the ability to draw meaning from the printed page and interpret this information appropriately” (Grabe & Stoller, 2002, p. 9).



Shortcomings of common definitions

They do not specify how

1. reading ability varies with language proficiency and background knowledge
2. complex the reading process is
3. reading is carried out under time constraints of working memory

Think of a person who is a good reader.

- **What makes this person a good reader?**



Taxonomy of Reading Skills

(Hudson, 2007, pp. 97-98)

- recognizing the script of a language
- deducing the meanings and use of unfamiliar lexical items
- understanding explicitly stated information in the text
- understanding information in the text, not explicitly stated
- understanding relations between parts of a text through grammatical cohesion devices
- distinguishing the main idea from supporting details
- basic referencing skills
- skimming

Variables that Affect Reading Success

(Grabe, 2009)

1. grapheme and word recognition
2. phonological recognition
3. morphological and syntactic structure
4. vocabulary knowledge
5. processing skills and strategies
6. background knowledge
7. text structure understanding
8. context of the reading act

Life Without Reading

- Approximately 80% of the world's population is reported to be able to read (Grabe & Stoller, 2002).
- Global literacy rate = 83% (UNESCO, 2008)
- Imagine what your life would be like if you didn't know how to read?

Study the texts below and identify what makes each text difficult

1. कृषि के लिये एन आई पी परियोजना शुरू

पिछले आठ साल से लगभग ठहर सी गयी कृषि विकास की दर को फिर से तेज करने और नये जमाने की तकनीको के जरिये कृषि का कायापलट करने के लिये राष्ट्रीय कृषि नवीनीकरण परियोजना (एन आई पी) की शुरुआत की गयी है। लगभग 1170 करोड रुपये की इस परियोजना मे 80 फीसदी निवेश विश्व बैंक की तरफ से किया जायेगा ।

इस परियोजना के तहत उत्पादन और उपभोगता क्षेत्र मे अनुसंधान के साथ - साथ मौलिक और रणनीतिक अनुसंधान व ब्यापारिक विकास मे संस्थागत कुशलता को बढावा दिया जाना है।

(Retrieved from http://www.hindilearner.com/hindi_tutorials/learnhindilanguage_4.php)

2. The pressure drop and liquid hold-up for the G-L cross/counter-current flow in a packed column with a novel internal was simulated using a Eulerian/Eulerian two-fluid model solved by a commercial CFD software CFX4.4. To minimize bypass flow caused by the internal, optimum baffle thickness and width of the internal's passage are proposed (Yuan, et al., 2005).

Text Difficulty (continued)

3. Ideas imprinted on the senses are real things, or do really exist, this we do not deny, but we deny that they can subsist without the minds which perceive them, or that they are resemblances of any archetypes existing without the mind: since the very being of a sensation or idea consists in being perceived, and an idea can be like nothing but an idea. (Berkeley, 1949, cited in Nuttall, 1996, p. 7)
4. “Cavorting in the vicinity of the residential area populated by those of piscatorial avocation, the miniscule crustacean was enmeshed in a reticulated object with interstices between the intersections” (Nuttall, 1996, p. 7).

What makes a text difficult?

(Nuttall, 1996)

1. Unknown code
2. Lack of background knowledge
3. Complex concepts
4. Unshared assumptions
5. Uncommon vocabulary
6. Complex syntax



Key factors that influence second language (L2) reading skill development

(Grabe, 2009)

- first and second language proficiency
- the structure and writing system of the first language
- reading skills and strategies
- background knowledge
- motivation

Oral Language

1. Reading builds on oral language (Burgoyne, Kelly, Whiteley, & Spooner, 2009; Koda, 2007).
2. Academic language proficiency is key to student **SUCCESS** (Cummins, 2000; Thomas & Collier, 2002).
3. The use of English in school is more important than the use outside (see review in Genesee et al., 2006).
4. English language development is not impeded by first language (L1) development/use (see review in Genesee et al., 2006).

Running Dictation

(Nation & Newton, 2009, p. 62)

1. Post a selected passage for dictation outside the classroom door.
2. Have the students pair up and decide who will be Student A and Student B.
3. Student A runs out of the classroom, reads the dictation, returns to the classroom, and recites the dictation to Student B.
4. Student B writes the dictation while Student A checks for accuracy.
5. They continue until they are satisfied that the dictation is transcribed correctly.

L1 and L2 Literacy

1. EAL students use their L1 to draw on their prior knowledge and experience (see review in Genesee et al., 2006).
2. L1 literacy contributes to L2 literacy development (see review in August & Shannahan, 2006).
3. Proficient L2 readers can compensate for a lack of English proficiency by using strategies while reading (Carrell, Pharis, & Liberto, 1989).



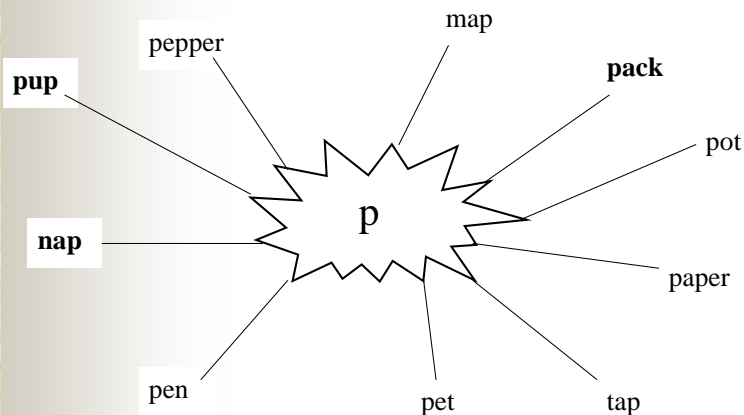
Phonological Awareness

- the ability to recognize and manipulate the sounds of speech
- levels
 - syllable
 - rhyme
 - phoneme

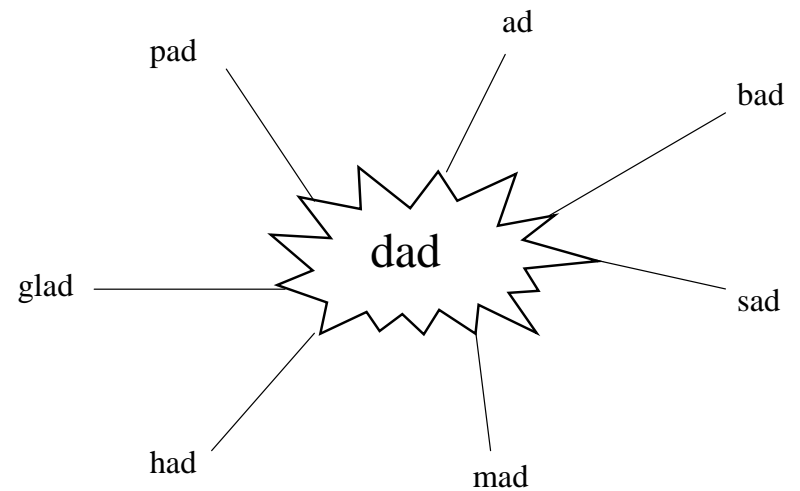
Strategies for developing phonological awareness and decoding

- Word sorts
- Word / sound webs
- Word finds

Sound Web



Word Web





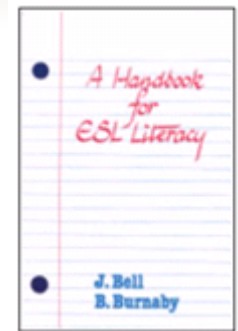
Pre-Reading Skills

Pre-Reading Skills

- Visual discrimination of shapes
- Direction
- Letter formation

Visual Discrimination and Direction Exercises

(Bell & Burnaby, 1984)



- Focus on major differences

Circle the different shape: O □ O O ∇ ∇ ∇ O

Circle the matching shape: T | T ⊥ t † L | ⊏ ⊓ L l

- Focus on significant features for forming letters

Circle the matching shape: ∇ | O Δ

Circle all matching shapes: a | o e b a c f a

Influence of L1 on Vocabulary Learning

(Wimmer & Goswami, 1994)

EAL Students who speak

- other European languages which include words with Greek and Latin roots have an advantage.
- languages that are completely unrelated to English, often have a harder time learning low frequency Greek and Latin based words.

Vocabulary

- Research has found strong relationships between vocabulary, reading comprehension, and academic achievement (Francis, Rivera, Lesaux, Kieffer, & Rivera, 2006; Nation, 2009; Sen & Blatchford, 2001).
- Reading comprehension and fluency can be increased through vocabulary instruction.
- In any class there needs to be both explicit and implicit vocabulary instruction (Nation, 2001; Slavin & Calderón, 2001).

Word Families

- 1000 word families account for more than 70% of the words in everyday text, and 2000 account for about 80% (Nation, 2006).
- <http://www.lex tutor.ca> (Cobb, 1997)

2000 + AWL = 90%

- If students know the first 2000 plus 570 AWL words, then they know about 90% of the words they will meet in any academic text.
- *Academic Word List (AWL)* (Coxhead, 2000)
<http://www.victoria.ac.nz/lals/resources/academicwordlist/>

THE FOURTEEN WORDS

Words	Prefix	Common Meaning	Root	Common Meaning
1. precept	pre-	before	cept	take, seize
2. detain	de-	away, down	ten, tain	hold, have
3. intermittent	inter-	between, among	mis, mit	send
4. offer	ob-	against	fer	bear, carry
5. insist	in-	into	sist	stand
6. monograph	mono-	alone, one	graph	write
7. epilogue	epi-	upon	logue	say, study of
8. aspect	ad-	to, toward	spect	see
9. uncomplicated	un- com-	not together, with	plicate	fold
10. nonextended	non- ex-	not out, beyond	tend	stretch
11. reproduction	re- pro-	back, again forward, for	duc, duce, duct	lead
12. indisposed	in- dis-	not apart, not	pose	put, place
13. oversufficient	over- sub-	above under	ficient	make, do
14. mistranscribe	mis- trans-	wrong across, beyond	scrip, script, scribe	write

(Nation, 1990, cited in Anderson, 1999, p. 28)

Vocabulary Strategies

(Nation, 2001)

- Examine the unknown word and break it into parts.
- Determine the role/function the word plays in the sentence.
- Identify any context clues that might help define the word.

Instructional Strategies that Work

Category	Definition
Similarities and differences	Identifying similarities and differences among items
Summarizing and note-taking	Summarizing information in a way by capturing the main ideas and key supporting details
Reinforcing effort and providing recognition	Understanding the relationship between effort and achievement and recognizing students for attaining goals
Practice and homework	Practicing reviewing and applying the knowledge and skills
Non-linguistic representation	Representing and elaborating on knowledge using images
Cooperative learning	Interacting in groups to enhance learning
Setting objectives and providing feedback	Assisting learners in meeting learning goals

(Marzano, Pickering & Pollock, 2001)

Adapted Frayer Model (Frayer et al., 1969)

<u>Word</u> <u>L1 Translation</u>	<u>Picture</u>
<u>Friendly Definition</u> <u>Common Collocations</u>	<u>Nonexample</u>

Moving Beyond the Word Level: Promoting Formulaic Language

- Academic formulas list (Simpson-Vlach & Ellis, 2010)
http://www-personal.umich.edu/~ncellis/NickEllis/Publications_files/AFL_paper_AppLinxPrepub.pdf
- Phrasal expression list (Martinez & Schmidt, 2012)



The difference between a skill and a strategy

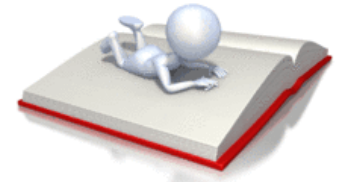
- A reading skill becomes a strategy when the reader can use it independently, reflect on it, and understand what it is, how it works, and when to apply it to new texts. When a skill is used intentionally to achieve a goal, it becomes a strategy (Paris, Wasik, & Turner, 1991).

Reading Strategies

Strategy instruction assists learners in increasing

1. their metacognitive awareness and regulation of reading strategies, and
2. their level of engagement in reading English texts.

(Auerbach & Paxton, 1997)



Before, During, and After Reading Strategies

(Anderson, 1999)

Before

- thinking about what one knows about a subject
- having a purpose for reading

During

- focusing attention while reading
- monitoring one's comprehension

After

- understanding and summarizing how pieces of information fit together

Reading Strategies Used When Answering Multiple-choice Reading Comprehension Questions

(Abbott, 2006, 2010)

Bottom-up

breaking lexical items into smaller parts, scanning for details, identifying synonyms or paraphrases, matching words to key visuals, matching key vocabulary in the text to key vocabulary in the item, using knowledge of grammar and punctuation, and using local context cues to interpret a word or phrase

Top-down

skimming for gist, connecting or relating information presented in different parts of the text, drawing an inference based on information presented in the text, using background knowledge to speculate beyond the text, and recognizing discourse format

Reading Strategy Instruction

- (a) describe what the strategy is
- (b) explain why the strategy should be learned
- (c) provide examples of the circumstances under which the strategy should be used
- (d) model its use
- (e) provide opportunities to practice
- (f) evaluate success

(Anderson, 1999; Paris & Winograd, 1990; Rubin, Chamot, Harris, & Anderson, 2007; Winograd & Hare, 1988)



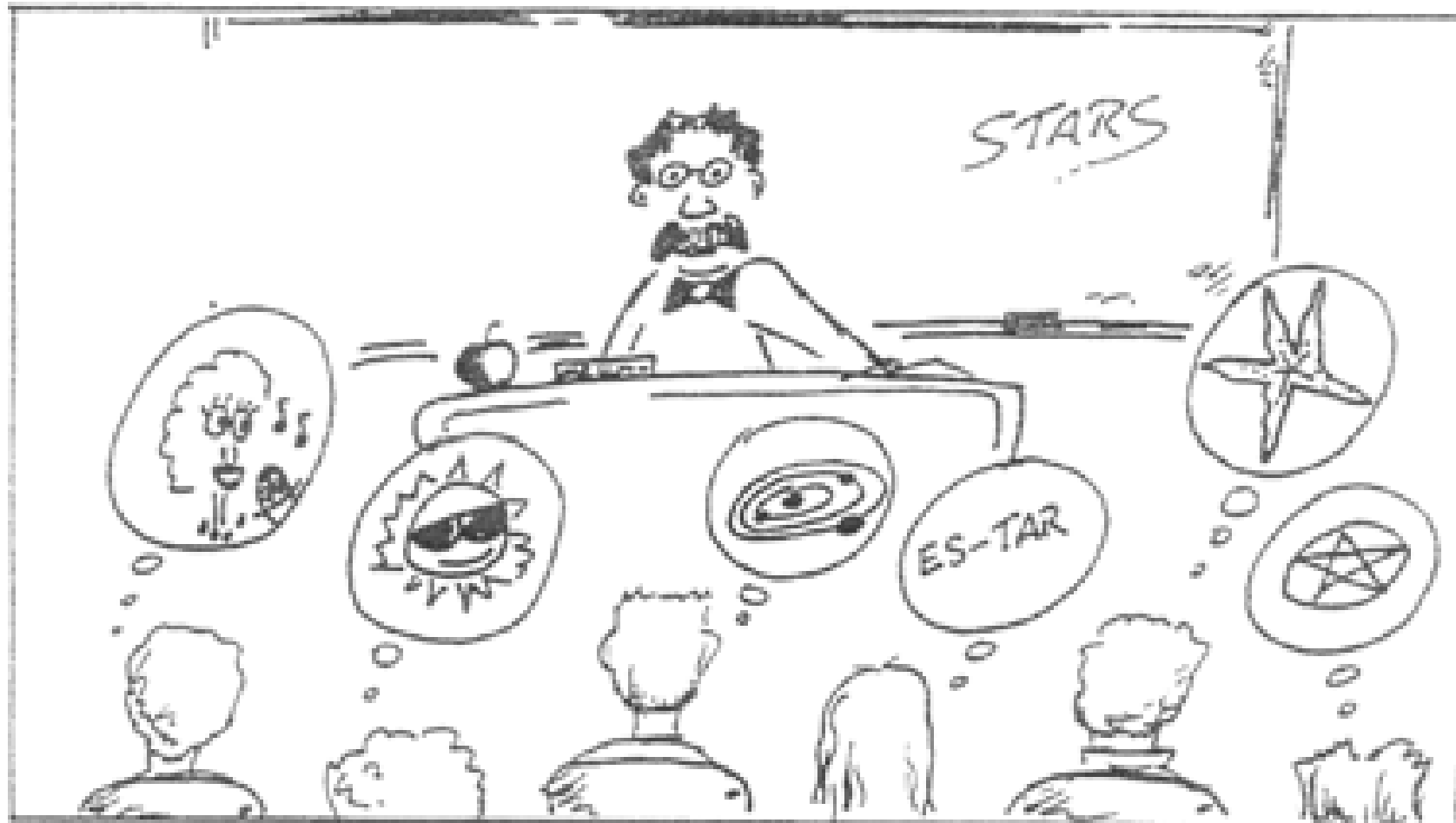
Successful Reading Strategy Instruction

Depends on teacher

1. commitment
2. modelling
3. ability to convince students of the value of strategies

(Anderson , 1999; Cohen & Weaver, 2006; Mokhtari & Sheorey, 2002)

Background Knowledge



Activating Background Knowledge

- “Our background knowledge is like a lens through which we understand what we read” and it “allows teachers to unlock vocabulary before reading” (Anderson, 1999, p. 11).
- Students sometimes do not have the necessary knowledge (Brisk & Harrington, 2000).

K-W-L-H Charts (KWL – Ogle, 1986)

K - Stands for what students **KNOW** about the concept/topic.

W - Stands for what they **WANT** to learn.

L - Stands for what they **LEARN** as they read.

H - Stands for **HOW** they can learn more

Other graphic organizers

<http://olc.spsd.sk.ca/de/pd/instr/strats/graphicorganizers/>

Read Alouds (Chen & Mora-Flores, 2007;)

- build crucial background knowledge, and foster reading comprehension and fluency.

Procedure

- read text aloud
- engage students in dialogue about the language and content
- model thinking aloud (questioning, summarizing, elaborating, activating prior knowledge, monitoring comprehension, inferencing, using visual cues and text structure awareness)

Reading Fluency

- timed repeated reading (Nation, 2009)
- charting progress on a graph
<http://www.victoria.ac.nz/lals/staff/paul-nation.aspx>
- recorded books (Pluck 2006)
- paired reading (Li & Nes, 2001)
- teacher-led choral reading (McCauley & McCauley, 1992)
- readers' theatre (Kozub, 2000)

Text Structure Awareness

(Grabe, 2009)

Signaling systems

- patterns for organizing information (e.g., cause and effect, compare-contrast, problem-solution, description, classification, procedural sequence, chronological ordering, story grammar)
- relations between sections and whole
- headings and subheadings

Motivation

- factors: intrinsic and extrinsic value of reading, and reading efficacy (Mori, 2002)
- is a key factor that can influence the rate and success of L2 learning.
- can make up for deficiencies in language learning aptitude and learning conditions (Dornyei & Ushioda, 2011).

Extensive Reading

The best way to become a fluent reader is to read more (Allington, 2001, Elley, 2000; Krashen, 1988).



Promotes

- positive attitudes, confidence, motivation, fluency, automatic word recognition, and knowledge of syntax and text structures.



Extensive Reading

is where learners read a lot of easy material in the new language. They choose their own material and read it independently from the teacher. (Krashen, 1988).

Should be fun! (Bamford & Day, 2004, p. 6)

Effective Reading Instruction Promotes

- oral language development
- automatic word-recognition
- vocabulary development
- intensive reading
- strategic reading
- fluent reading
- text structure awareness
- extensive reading

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Thank you!

