**1/ Skill or Strategy? What is a skill and what is a strategy?**

A skill is something you do automatically without thinking about it. You do it the same way every time. Tying your shoes is an example of a skill. An example of a reading skill is instantly recognizing and saying a word such as the. You do these things without thinking about them. They are automatized**. A strategy, in contrast**, is a plan. You reason when you do it, and you often adjust the plan as you go along. When you plan a trip by car, you are thoughtful, making decisions about what highways to take, where to spend the night, and so on. And if you run into unanticipated problems along the way (such as extensive road construction), you adjust your strategy—you change your route. In reading, making predictions is a strategy because readers are thoughtful in using text clues and prior knowledge to make an initial prediction, but they remain ready to change or adjust a prediction when subsequent text clues provide more information

**2/ What is reading comprehension?**

Understanding a written text means extracting the required information from it as **efficiently** as possible. For example, we apply different reading strategies when looking at a notice board to see if there is an advertisement for a particular type of flat and when carefully reading an article of special interest in a scientific journal. Yet locating the relevant advertisement on the board and understanding the new information contained in the article demonstrates that the reading purpose in each case has been successfully fulfilled. In the first case, a competent reader will quickly reject the irrelevant information and find what he is looking for. In the second case, it is not enough to understand the gist of the text; more detailed comprehension is necessary.

It is therefore essential to take the following elements into consideration:

**What do we read?:**

Here are the main text-types one usually comes across:

* Novels, short stories, tales; other literary texts and passages (e.g. essays, diaries, anecdotes, biographies)
* Plays
* Poems, limericks, nursery rhymes
* Letters, postcards, telegrams, notes
* Newspapers and magazines (headlines, articles, editorials, letters to the editor, stop press, classified ads, weather forecast, radio / TV/ theatre programmes)
* Specialized articles, reports, reviews, essays, business letters, summaries, precis, accounts, pamphlets (political and other)
* Handbooks, textbooks, guidebooks
* Recipes
* Advertisements, travel brochures, catalogues
* Puzzles, problems, rules for games
* Instructions (e.g. warnings), directions (e.g. How to use ... ), notices, rules and regulations, posters, signs (e.g. road signs), forms (e.g. application forms, landing cards), graffiti, menus, 3 price lists, tickets

**Why do we read?:**

. Grellet (1981, p. 4) identifies two main reasons for reading: reading for pleasure and reading for information. However, each of these categories is very broad and could be further subdivided. For example, reading for pleasure might include reading humorous posts on social media or reading a novel, as well as many things in between. Reading for information could also be broken down into related but separate areas, such **as reading quickly** to identify appropriate information, evaluating information, and integrating information from multiple sources.

**How do we read:**

Strategies are an important part of comprehension. Students use different strategies depending on the reading situation, these include:

* previewing • Making predictions. • Monitoring and questioning what is happening. • Adjusting predictions as you go re prediction) • Creating images in the mind( visualizing) . • skimming . scanning. Summarizing

These strategies can be categorized as:

• Before you begin reading. • As you begin reading. • During reading. • After reading

**Before-You-Begin Strategies :**

Readers are more motivated, and comprehend more, when they are reading for a purpose that makes sense to them. So the best reading experiences begin with the reader asking, “Why am I reading this?” “How will I use it?” Even if the text is a story being read just for enjoyment, the purpose should be clear to the reader. This again takes us back to Chapter 1 and the importance of keeping the main thing the main thing. By starting any reading experience with a clear purpose for reading, we are more likely to develop students who do read

**As-You-Begin Strategies**

Predicting is the strategy relied upon most as you begin. As soon as a reader sees the title of a selection or looks at a picture on a cover or reads a first line, prior knowledge is triggered and, on the basis of that prior knowledge, predictions (or hypotheses) are formed about what is to come. Predictions can be based on three kinds of prior knowledge.

1. Prior **knowledge about the purpose of the reading**. As noted above, a crucial before-you-read question is, “Why am I reading this?” It is crucial because having a viable reason for reading is key to motivation. But purpose also can suggest what one looks for when reading, or **what predictions to make**. For instance, when reading the morning paper, a reader may be concerned with the gist of a news article but not the details, and will seek only the gist. In contrast, when reading a recipe, predictions focus on details because details are crucial to cooking tasks
2. Prior knowledge about the topic. Topic is also important as you begin. For instance, if a reader picks up a book with a picture of an elephant on the cover, or if one of the first sentences is about elephants, it is anticipated that something will be learned about elephants, and the reader uses what is known about elephants to make predictions about what is coming
3. Prior knowledge **about type of text**. The type of text directs readers as they begin. Recognizing the text as a narrative, for examples, triggers prior knowledge about story structure, and we expect we will learn about a setting, a character, and a problem in the first few pages. Recognizing a text as expository, in contrast, triggers prior knowledge about fact books and information.

**During-­Reading Strategies:**

The primary strategy used during reading is a combination of monitoring, questioning, and repredicting . Successful readers pay attention to what is happening and anticipate that there might be a need to change a prediction. It is as if readers are constantly engaged in silent questioning, saying to themselves as they read along, Does this make sense?” When a reader answers by saying, “No, this no longer makes sense,” then a new prediction must be made

The predicting, monitoring, and repredicting cycle is repeated over and over again as the reader proceeds through text. It is not a static, one-time process. It is a process that goes on constantly. As readers become proficient, strategies in this cycle are no longer individual entities. They are combined together so that the process seems to be one big strategy.

While the predicting–monitoring–repredicting cycle is the dominant during-reading strategy, other strategies are also sometimes used. For instance, in narrative text with descriptive language, good comprehenders may use their prior knowledge to create images—that is, to infer what the scene in the narrative looks like or feels like (see Example 7). Similarly, when the need arises, successful readers stop and use fix-it strategies to problem-solve a blockage to meaning (see Example 9). In such cases, good readers say to themselves, “What is the problem that has stopped me here?” and “What strategies have I learned that I could use to fix this problem?”

Sometimes the problem is a word having an unknown meaning, whereupon the reader might apply a context clue strategy to figure out the meaning.

• Sometimes the problem involves syntactic (or word-order) elements, whereupon the reader might do a “look-back” in which the material is read again

• Sometimes the problem is a lack of a meaningful connection, whereupon the reader will search for relevant prior knowledge from past experience.

• Sometimes the problem is a lost focus for why the material is being read in the first place, whereupon the reader will stop and rethink how the reading is to be used

**After-­Reading Strategies**

Comprehension does not stop when the last page of a selection is read. Good readers reflect after they read. They ask themselves questions such as:

• Did I achieve the purpose I had for reading this selection?

• Did I find out what I wanted to find out

• How has my thinking changed as a result of the reading I just did?

• Is what I found out important or accurate?

• How can I use what I read?

The following are important after-reading strategies:

• Deciding on the text’s important message or main idea

• Determining theme

• Summarizing

• Drawing conclusions

. • Evaluating

• Synthesizing