

УДК 372.881.111.1

Olena Syvachuk<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> teacher ZNTU

### **MOST ESSENTIAL READING SKILLS YOUR STUDENTS NEED**

"The greatest pleasure in life is that of reading" as William Hazlitt put it. Reading is certainly one of the most essential and basic skills that we have to acquire at some point of our life. It all starts with our parents reading to us before sleep and then develops into reading for and by ourselves.

What is reading, however? Wikipedia states that "reading is the complex cognitive process of decoding symbols to derive meaning. It is a form of language processing". Nevertheless, current thinking in the field of reading research proposes this definition of reading as "an interactive process in which the reader's prior knowledge of the world interacts with the message conveyed directly or indirectly by the text". If you think about it, reading is a process as it has various stages (before-, during-, and after-reading) at which different tasks need to be performed. Also, reading is interactive as the mind of the reader interacts, conducts a dialogue, actively engages with the text to decode, assign meaning, and interpret. Next, the reader applies prior knowledge of the world to this act, and finally, gets a message which is to be conveyed or constructed. It is so much more than starting with the first word on the page and moving along each line till you get to the end.

You probably know that even in your own language reading is regarded as important because it can be entertaining and educational, can open up new worlds and enrich your life, and can improve hand-eye co-ordination and enhance social skills.

But for learning a foreign language, in this case English, reading in that language has additional important benefits that can help you learn the language faster and more completely.

Reading is an essential skill for academic success, and we all know how important it is. We would not spend the time we do teaching it if we did not value reading. Even though reading is so essential, we often overlook the **fundamental reading skills** that our students need. Reading is not just about going from the beginning to the end of a written passage. There are different reading strategies to use for different informational outcomes.

To function effectively, a mechanic needs many tools. So does a reader. Here are a few strategies your students should learn to give them full academic success:

1. Surveying. It is a specialized technique for getting a mountaintop view of an article, chapter, or entire book. Written communication has certain characteristics which make surveying possible. What a student needs is to read the title, the first paragraph, all headings, italicized words, graphs, and tables, and the last paragraph. Eventually the student will end up with the best overview with a minimal investment of time.

2. Skimming. It concentrates your attention on the meat of the text – the important part, the essentials. In order to skim your student will have to read the first and the last sentences of the paragraph. In between there are always key words or phrases that expand, clarify, or support the main idea. To skim an entire article, chapter or book, the student will have to add paragraph skimming to the surveying technique.

3. Scanning. It is a proverbial needle-in-a-haystack situation. Scanning is not automatic. It needs practising. To insure accuracy in scanning your student should apply the following four steps: visualizing the thing to be spotted, using all the available clues, using paragraph topical clues and using systematic scanning patterns. Generally speaking, scanning serves two functions. It uncovers relevant information. It also accelerates your student's reading speed and flexibility.

Thus, the survey is like a quick, high-altitude glimpse of a large city from a plane. Skimming is a lower-altitude view, with more details observable. And scanning is a supersonic zooming in for a close glance at only one specific house.

But there is another reading technique which is no less important than speed. It is reading for meaning.

4. Reading for details or facts focuses on the top side of comprehension, that is, what is on the surface. It opens up a new in-depth side of comprehension when one side is not enough. After all, you build meaning by fitting details together. At this point, reading and thinking become inseparable. Even though "when reading for detail, **students should read every sentence**, but they should not try to know the exact meaning of each word... They **should rather aim to understand about eighty percent of the information they read and** infer the meaning of unknown words as they read. If they need an answer to a particular question that they may have missed, they can always go back and scan for it."

Reading may sometimes seem as easy as abc, but in fact there are strategic ways to make your students' reading more useful and productive. By teaching them surveying, skimming and scanning in addition to reading for detail, you will give your students the strategies they need to be successful learners.