

ENHANCING STUDENTS' GROWTH IN READING BY  
DEVELOPING THEIR READING STRATEGIES

A THESIS IN TEACHING ENGLISH TO SPEAKERS OF OTHER LANGUAGES

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# ENHANCING STUDENTS' GROWTH IN READING BY DEVELOPING THEIR READING STRATEGIES

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## ABSTRACT

Research on reading comprehension has shown that proficient readers are those who construct meaning on their own using effective higher level reading skills and strategies. Also, reading researchers argue that effective teachers are those who teach comprehension strategically. However, in spite of all this focus on reading as a unified mental event where reasoning processes take place while reading for comprehension and the attempts to make these invisible processes observable and teachable, UAE government schools' reading textbooks and teachers still focus only on a small set of lower level, bottom-up comprehension strategies in teaching and testing reading. Students are stuck whenever faced with inferential higher level thinking questions and at a loss for the right reading strategies to cope with difficult reading materials consistent with standardized tests and academic readings. Given this situation, how can we, as teachers and reading researchers, help our struggling learners become better strategic readers and prepare them for university studies? I believe that by teaching and developing our students' effective comprehension strategies, we will contribute to their growth in reading and make of them autonomous proficient meaning makers.

In an attempt to test this hypothesis, I diagnosed my students' (the participants) familiarity and use of both high-frequency lower and higher level strategies through a reading test, and based on results from this test together with other information that was obtained from the examination of the participants' pupil's book reading passages and the comprehension questions accompanying them, I tailored a three-month strategic reading course (the treatment). Such a course permitted me to acquaint the

participants with eight key reading strategies either by consolidating the ones they know or familiarizing them with new ones. This battery of strategies included skimming, guessing word meanings, making predictions, using cohesive markers, and other strategies. As a sequel to this, I gave the participants a posttest to track their progress in the mastery of the taught strategies. The findings drawn from the quantitative and qualitative data gathered indicate the strategic reading course partly enabled the participants to gain a great deal of knowledge about a good battery of reading strategies which fluent readers possess. Thanks to this strategic reading course, the participants were more aware of the reading strategies, got insightful knowledge of how to use them, and approached reading passages using bottom-up and top down reading models. These findings suggest that the participants were on their way to developing proficiency in reading and support the hypothesis that by teaching UAE learners effective reading strategies, we can help them become more effective readers.

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## CHAPTER 1

### INTRODUCTION

The view that states that reading instruction is a central component in the language arts curriculum has received, since the 1980s, consensus among reading researchers and teachers. Since then many strategy-oriented reading instructional methods and books have appeared and have contributed to the enhancement of students' growth in reading in the EFL/ESL reading context (Barton & Sawyer, 2004). However, in the UAE context, government school teachers still use locally designed English textbooks that consist of non-authentic reading passages accompanied by lower level, unvaried comprehension questions. As a result our students, EFL learners, still struggle with their readings in English after many years of instruction. Emirati higher educational institutions such as the Higher Colleges of Technology (HCT), where the medium of instruction is English, have reported that high school students joining them get very low scores in reading on admission or placements tests on entry and later find difficulties in coping with high level English reading materials (Khoury & Berger, 2005). They argue that students are not well-equipped with the necessary reading strategies. It is this critical situation that encouraged me to research my students' reading difficulties and particularly their knowledge and use of reading strategies as effective comprehension tools.

#### Purpose of the Study

Broadly speaking, this research is worth doing because it will raise the awareness of UAE English language teachers and syllabus designers about the necessity to give more attention to teaching reading strategies. By helping students learn and later master reading strategies such as skimming, making predictions and thematic connections, and drawing conclusions and other effective reading skills, teachers can help their students take control of the comprehension process and be aware that this approach to reading is a way to their growth towards more confidence, independence, and autonomy in learning.

More importantly, this research aims to show that by teaching students how to use and apply reading strategies, and especially those of a higher level nature, they will enjoy thinking about, interacting with, and engaging in reading and will do better in standardized tests such as IELTS or admission tests like CEPA, required for UAE

higher institutions. The results of this research will also contribute to textbook and curriculum design through an analysis of current textbooks that suggests ways for their improvement.

Textbooks in use in the UAE government schools do not include enough activities or tasks encouraging students to think critically while reading. Most of the reading comprehension questions are display, referential in nature, and likely to minimize students' opportunities to construct meaning on their own, to read between and beyond the lines, and to use their metacognitive reading strategies.

#### Research Questions/Assumptions

I believe that the reading problem our students are facing is due, partly, to unfamiliarity with and inability to use effective reading strategies. Students are used to reading passages followed by literal, display reading comprehension questions, and are taught by teachers who are not trained in reading strategies. Al Sheikh and Atwa (1995) argue that this problem is compounded by students having weak L1 reading competence. Such a problem comes from students' unwillingness to read outside the Arabic classes and this adversely affects their abilities to express themselves orally. For all these reasons, students, as EFL learners, are stuck whenever faced with inferential higher level thinking questions and are at a loss for the right strategies to cope with difficult reading materials consistent with standardized tests and the academic readings they are faced with at the end of high school. To examine these issues, the following questions will be addressed in this research:

- (1) Can teaching reading strategically help learners in the UAE become more effective readers and enhance their growth in reading?
- (2) Will the mastery of high-frequency reading strategies maximize their chances of doing well in university admission sub-components reading tests?
- (3) Can these learners become autonomous readers?

Reading strategies research (e.g., Grabe & Stoller, 2002; O'Malley & Chamot, 1990; Oxford, 1990) suggests such a situation can be remedied by instructing reading comprehension strategically. Commenting on their experiences with teaching reading strategies, many teachers reported that "their students approached [USA] proficiency tests more strategically and they were more efficacious in reading harder material" (Dowhower, 1999, p. 678). Consistent with this, many teacher researchers such as

Baker (2002), Nagano and Vogt (2003), and Anderson and Richards, (2003) found that teaching reading strategically helped their learners become better readers.

More importantly, the popularity some strategy-oriented reading course books are enjoying all over the world in general and in the Gulf in particular such *Reading Power* (Mikulecky & Jeffries, 1986), the *Tapestry* reading series (Sokolik, 2005) and *Interactions Two: A Reading Skills Book* (Kirn & Hartmann, 1997) shows that teaching reading strategies is rewarding and promising.

Based on research findings, I hypothesize that by developing our students' reading strategies we can make them better, more strategic and autonomous readers and eventually maximize their chances of doing well in the reading sub-components of university admission tests.

### Overview of Chapters and Appendices

Chapter 1 describes how UAE high school EFL learners are not keeping up with the latest trends in learning reading and how this has affected their abilities to become fluent readers and succeed in tackling difficult texts such as those found in university admission tests. Also, in this chapter, I state what I believe is the main problem plaguing the reading situation of UAE government high school readers and propose how this problem can be remedied. Chapter 2 reviews the research-relevant literature. Specifically, it sheds light on the nature of reading, describes reading as an interactive, mental process, and discusses the three different models of reading. Besides, in this chapter, I dwell on the dilemmas involved with the teaching of reading comprehension in the UAE context, review and describe how relevant literature, research, and reading course books have defined, classified, and instructed reading strategies, and discuss the wealth of benefits that can be reaped from teaching reading strategies.

The focus of chapter 3 is on the methodology followed in this study. It provides a detailed description of the participants, their number, educational and reading backgrounds, and all the necessary data. It also fully explains the instruments used to collect data, specifically the participants' pupil's book examination, the pretest, the posttest, and all the structured and non-structured questionnaires, how they were developed, and what they consisted of. In addition, in chapter 3, I describe the treatment and the eight reading strategies the participants studied and clarify the procedures followed to conduct the survey and interviews. Chapter 4 shows the results

drawn from the data collected before, during, and after the treatment. Also, in this chapter, I analyse these findings and show how the participants witnessed enhancement in their reading growth and became better readers through developing their comprehension strategies (reading and text-attack strategies).

The final chapter summarizes the main findings, shows how they are in agreement with what the reading literature and research offer on reading strategies instruction, discusses the pedagogical implications gained from this research, and examines the study limitations and suggests some directions for future research.

Appendix A contains the actual research instruments: questionnaires, a feedback reports, pretest and posttest and other materials. Appendix A.1 provides a sample of reading comprehension questions delivered from the participants' pupil's textbook. Appendix A.2 shows the pretest the participants took before the treatment. Appendix A.3 is about the evaluative questionnaire the participants completed after the pretest. The results of this test are shown in Appendix A.4. Appendix B contains some of the materials used in the treatment. Appendices B.1, B.2, and B3 provide samples of the strategic reading lessons handouts distributed to students during the treatment and Appendix B.4 illustrates the feedback report the participants completed after each strategic lesson. Appendix B.5 contains the running reading log the participants completed from their home readings. Finally, Appendix B.6 provides the first paragraph of a story used in the inferring strategy lesson. Appendix B.7 shows the different ways in which inference questions are phrased in TOEFL tests. Appendix C contains the post-reading tests the participants took after the treatment.

## CHAPTER 2

### REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

#### The Nature of Reading

It is essential to gain a deep understanding of what reading is before embarking on a discussion of reading strategies. Being well-informed about successful models of the reading process, being aware of what is involved in it, and knowing how we make sense of printed material is a necessary solid theoretical basis for any discussion of reading strategies. Understanding the nature of reading provides helpful insights into how reading strategies work, where they are situated in the reading process, and how they should be taught by teachers and learned by students. So, this chapter will briefly review the literature relevant to reading in general before examining in detail what reading strategies literature and research have to say on comprehension strategies, their types, definitions, classifications, and importance to EFL learners.

#### Defining Good Reading and Fluent Readers

Any definition of reading should, as Grabe and Stoller (2002) suggest, tell us “about what happens when we read [reasoning processes] and how we comprehend a text” (p. 4). So a simple definition that states that reading is a way to draw information from a piece of print and make an interpretation on that basis may be erroneous. Reading comprehension should be thought of as a remarkably complex phenomenon that involves many “processing skills that are coordinated in very efficient combinations” (p. 4). Similarly, Tovani (2000) argues that “understanding how meaning is constructed from print is essential if teachers are to improve the comprehension of their students” (p. 17), and if parents are to help their schoolchildren become good readers. Often reading is understood to be limited to decoding skills. Tovani is astonished at some parents who often tell reading teachers that their children are good readers, but they just have trouble with comprehension. Here the children’s reading levels are defined by their abilities to decode words and not by their abilities to construct meaning from print. Aligning herself with Tovani and Eskey (2000), Baker (2002) explains that, when teaching reading comprehension, she wants to “develop readers that make meaning from texts” (p. 19) and not readers who know just how to decode words correctly. Like these researchers, Ogle (1986) suggests that “reading must be about thinking and constructing meaning” (p. 17).

It's clear that reductionist definitions of reading as the skill to combine letters and recognize and decode words limit our understanding of reading to only those aspects relevant to surface cueing systems, which results in limited comprehension and struggling readers. According to Rumelhart (1976), unlike struggling readers, proficient readers use six cueing systems to understand texts and take advantage of the text's richness. The first three, which are graphophonic cues, lexical cues, and syntactic cues, are directed to surface structures. They are "typically emphasized during the primary grades and provide the reader with visual and auditory clues for recognizing and pronouncing words as well as understanding sentence structure" (p. 18). The remaining three, which are semantic cues, schematic cues, and pragmatic cues, are deep structures and are likely to permit the reader "to interpret, analyze, and draw inferences from the text." Tovani (2000) asserts that both surface and deep structures are of paramount importance but "unless [readers] construct meaning, they are not comprehending" (p. 19). According to Tovani, these cues were further elaborated on by reading researchers in the 1990s who suggested that successful readers are those who do the following:

- use existing knowledge to make sense of new information
- ask questions about the text before, during and after reading
- draw inferences from the text
- monitor their comprehension
- use "fix-up" strategies when meaning breaks down
- determine what is important
- synthesize information to create new thinking.

In short, reading research suggests that one should be aware of the misconceptions surrounding reading definitions and argues that readers must go beyond decoding and read between and beyond the lines. Only in this way can readers use the surface and deep cueing systems to understand texts.

#### Reading as a Dynamic and an Interactive Process

A great deal of research has defined reading as a dynamic process (e.g., Alderson, 2000; Grabe & Stoller, 2002; Nuttall, 1982; Tovani, 2000; Yue, 1993). Aligning himself with these researchers, Anderson (1999) defines reading as "an active, fluent process which involves the reader and the reading material in building meaning" (p. 4). In a similar vein, Yue (1993) argues that reading is an interactive

process of communication. She states, “The interaction between the writer and the reader is made possible via the text. It is through the text that the writer encodes his message and it is also through the text that the reader gets the meaning of the message by decoding it” (p. 12). This interactive process, therefore, involves the reading material as well as the reader in meaning construction. Their respective roles will be discussed in the following sections.

#### The Text Contribution (Text Structure)

Yue (1993) defines the text as a semantic unit of form and meaning and distinguishes it from non-text by its texture which is achieved primarily through cohesion which, as Halliday and Hassan (1976, p. 4) state,

occurs when the interpretation of some element in the discourse is dependent on that of another. The one presupposes the other, in the sense that it cannot be effectively decoded except by recourse to it. Since the speaker or writer uses cohesion to signal texture, the listener or reader has to react to it in order to interpret it.

Cohesion guarantees the continuity of meaning between one segment of the text and another. This continuity is necessary for the interpretation of the text. Considering its importance in meaning construction, Yue pinpoints four merits of cohesion. She states that “cohesion provides the main thread of a text by showing that some entity or circumstance, some relevant feature argument persists from one moment to another in the semantic process as the meaning unfolds” (p. 12). It’s thanks to specific cohesive chains such as referential or conjunctive chains that the writer holds segments of a text together. More importantly, it’s through cohesion that we come to “feel” the print. Here cohesive chains permit the reader to feel the feelings encoded in the text and to make supportable inferences. The other merit highlighted by Yue is that cohesion “enables the reader to supply all the missing items necessary for the interpretation of a text” (p. 12). Texts, especially written ones, have many omissions and substitutions, and for the meaning construction to take place, the reader has to supply the missing items.

Better still, cohesion “provides the basis for making predictions and building expectations. The continuity expressed by cohesion constitutes the context that provides the basis for making predictions and building expectations in reading” (p. 13). A pattern signal such as “several” or “many” showing a pattern of organization of

listing in the first paragraph of a text can help the reader predict that the writer will enumerate a number of ideas, reasons or arguments in the remaining text. So drawing students' attention to the importance of signal words, or textual markers as Yue call them, in meaning construction will help them know what to pay attention to when they read and how they can boost their reading speed.

Yue suggests that it's "necessary to help our students identify different kinds of cohesive chains, which form the backbones of different types of text, because those chains signal organizational patterns of different types of text" (p. 13). She identifies four types of cohesive chains—the referential chain, the chain of ellipsis and substitution, the conjunctive chain, and the lexical chain:

1. The referential chain is produced by a combination of reference and lexical cohesion and, according to Yue, "provides the main thread of text by identifying the participants, the circumstances and the processes" (p. 13).
2. In the chain of ellipsis and substitution, the links are missing and the reader has to provide them in order to interpret the text.
3. The conjunctive chain is typical of descriptive, expository, and argumentative texts. Yue identifies four key types of conjunctive chains: (a) the special chain, (b) the temporal chain, (c) the cause-effect chain, and (d) the chain of analysis.
  - (a) The spatial chain is typical in a description of the location of places, movements, objects, and people in space and uses words of location and direction as cohesive markers. If paid attention to, the spatial chain, aids the reader to form mental pictures of the places, objects, and people described and thus enhances text comprehension and interpretation.
  - (b) The temporal chain or time order pattern, as Mikulecky and Jeffries (1986) call it, helps the writer order sequences, steps, and events chronologically and is made possible by signal words of time and sequence.
  - (c) The cause-effect chain is typical of argumentative and descriptive scientific texts and is composed of words indicating causes, effects, and reasons. Examples of cohesive markers used within this chain include words such as because, consequently, as a result of, and therefore.

(d) The chain of analysis is typical of expository and argumentative writings. It is made possible through signal words indicating order or sequence like first, then, and finally.

4. The lexical chain, according to Yue, “has three major forms: repetition, synonymy, and collocation.” (p. 14). These lexical chains indicate different organizational patterns such as (a) comparison/contrast, (b) definition, and (c) generalization patterns.

(a) The comparison-contrast pattern of organization is typical of expository texts that compare and contrast events, people, places, and objects. Signal words like but, however, on the contrary, and similarly are examples of cohesive markers in this pattern.

(b) The definition pattern is most often used in expository texts and is made possible through the use of cohesive markers such as “may be defined as, is/are known as, and means” (p. 14).

(c) The generalization pattern of organization is formed of words indicating probability, frequency, and quantity. Some of the signal words used in this pattern are most, few, some, always, usually, and probably.

Yue (1993) argues that drawing the readers’ attention to these types of cohesive chains and organizational patterns can equip students with effective reading tools and strategies to improve their EFL reading. While considering the print is necessary, Alderson (2000) argues that besides looking at the text structure “the reader is presumably also thinking about what he is reading: what it means to him, how it relates to other things he has read, to things he knows [background knowledge], to what he expects to come next in a text like this” (p. 3).

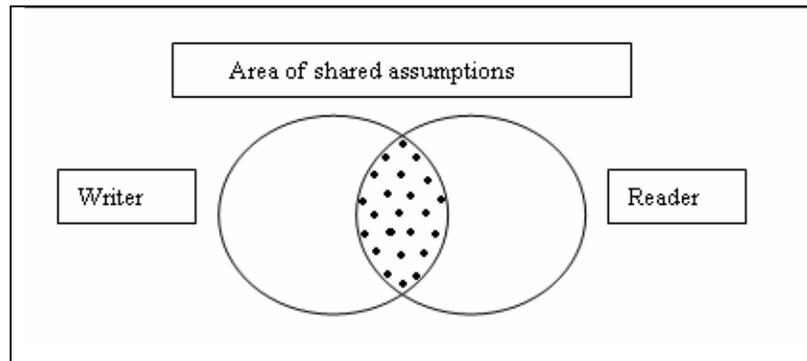
#### The Reader’s Contribution (The Reader’s Schema)

Alderson (2000) goes on to claim that many other things like thinking about how interesting, new, or boring the reading is can be going on while reading, and argues that “the process is likely to be dynamic, variable and different for the same reader on the same text at a different time or with a different purpose in reading” (p. 3). Consistent with these views, Anthony, Pearson, and Raphael (1993) think of reading as the “process of constructing meaning through the dynamic interaction among the reader’s existing knowledge, the information suggested by the written language, and the context of the reading situation” (p. 284). This definition swerves

away from decoding-only emphasis and focuses on reading as an interactive process in which the reader, when reading, utilizes a wealth of knowledge and experiences.

Another advocate of reading as an active, interactive process is Nuttall (1982) who argues that the text “meaning is not merely lying in the text waiting to be passively absorbed. On the contrary, the reader is actively involved and will very often have to get the meaning out” (p. 9). And if communication between the writer, reader, and the text is to take place, there must be a shared background between the reader and the writer. Nuttall (1982) best explains this attitude by giving four examples of short texts of different kinds of textual difficulty and showing that the principal impediment to comprehension is the lack of shared information between the reader and the writer. She reaches the conclusion that it is important for the reader and writer to have certain things in common and best illustrates this by giving a simple but significant drawing (see Figure 1) and saying that for “people of similar background, the [dotted] area will be much bigger than for people coming from different backgrounds” (p. 8). So the bigger the size of the dotted area is, the easier the reader will be likely to interpret the text.

Figure 1. Shared background



(Adapted from Nuttall, 1982, p. 8)

Similarly, Anthony, H. L., Pearson, P. D., Raphael, T. E. (1993) think that background knowledge or schemata “contributes to learners’ development of effective reading strategies and desire to read” (p. 284). Also, they agree that readers’ schemata influence how one interprets and remembers text and argue that learners must not only have background knowledge, but they must be capable of applying the knowledge related to the text they are reading. Studies underscoring the importance of background knowledge have been accompanied by instructional research that shows the effects of activating and enhancing learners’ background knowledge on reading

comprehension. Anthony et al. (1993) sum up several parallel lines of research which have provided a variety of instruction used to boost schemata. They think of instructional recommendations as follows:

general frameworks for planning activities throughout the comprehension process, (2) specific strategies designed to be used to enhance background knowledge before students engage in reading their text, and (3) student strategies for independently accessing background knowledge and using it appropriately as they read the text (p. 287).

One of the chief recommendations of the studies of background knowledge is the necessity to help students access and enrich text or topic-related current knowledge that they may already possess, or to help them correct misconceptions or build necessary knowledge about the target text prior to reading. More interestingly teachers, prior to reading a text, may ask students to apply their schemata as they produce predictions about the content of the upcoming reading material or make associations between their background knowledge with new information presented by the target reading material. One of the reading comprehension frameworks that provides opportunity to extend or apply concepts learned to new situations is the Experience-Text-Relationship (ETR) which directs teachers to tap into the learners' experiences before reading, closely look at the text to ensure the learners' comprehension of main ideas, and then build relationships between information in the text and the learners' knowledge base. More specifically, Hanson and Pearson's (1983) Inference Training (IT) specifies procedures useful during the pre-reading phase of a comprehension lesson. IT is a technique where students are stimulated to use their schemata to make predictions about what might happen in the text to be read. Prior knowledge questions make learners think of related personal experiences, after which they are asked to guess how a story character may behave in a familiar situation.

While background activation for the purpose of interacting with the writer is one of the bases of the top-down model of reading, text structure awareness, discussed earlier, constitutes the basis of bottom-up reading model. These two models are discussed below.

## Models of Reading

Much research on reading has been done since the 1980s, and a lot of emphasis was given to different approaches that may be taken by readers such as the top-down, the bottom-up, and the interactive approaches (Alderson, 2000; Anderson 1999; Grabe & Stoller, 2002).

Alderson (2000) defines bottom-up approaches as “serial models, where the reader begins with the printed word, recognizes graphic stimuli, decodes them to sounds, recognizes words and decodes meanings” (p. 17). These models suggest that all reading follows a mechanical pattern in which readers create a piece-by-piece mental translation of the information in the text and ignore their prior knowledge. In the extreme view, Grabe and Stoller (2002) argue that “the reader processes each word letter-by-letter, each sentence word-by-word and each text sentence-by-sentence in a linear fashion” (p. 32). In such models, the reader uses lower-level processes such as word recognition abilities and syntactic parsing. Types of models of reading that have achieved some prominence and are bottom-up oriented are word recognition models such as the Interactive Compensatory Model. According to Alderson (2000), this approach to reading was “typically associated with behaviorism in the 1940s and 1950s, and with ‘phonics’ approaches to the teaching of reading that argue children need to learn to recognize letters before they can read words, and so on” (p. 17). While this approach may be successful with beginners and allow the reader to interact with the writer via text, they do not emphasize the importance in reading of the knowledge that a reader brings to the text. Such centrality of the readers’ knowledge in text comprehension and interpretation is stressed in the top-down reading approaches (Alderson, 2004).

Grabe and Stoller (2002) argue that top-down models assume that reading is chiefly directed by the reader’s goals and expectations. These models “characterize the reader as someone who has a set of expectations about text information and samples enough information from the text to confirm or reject these expectations” (p. 32). Just like Grabe and Stoller, Alderson (2004) thinks the reader’s inferencing strategies and background activation are prominent features of the top-down models. He compares the reader’s schema to non-visual information that “transcends the text and includes the reader’s experience [and] knowledge of the world” (p. 17). A classic example of the top-down approach to reading comprehension is the Psycholinguistic

Guessing Game Model of Reading, which was first proposed by Ken Goodman in 1967 and which enables the reader to guess or predict the text's meaning on the basis of minimal textual information, and maximum use of existing, activated knowledge (Singer & Ruddell, 1976). Like the bottom-up models, the top-down approaches are one-sided and can't help the reader to construct meaning and comprehend the target text. In short, used separately these two approaches are reported to be inadequate (Alderson, 2000), and more adequate interactive models of reading are advocated (Anderson, 1999).

Grabe and Stoller (2002) explain that in such models, text comprehension is synthesized from multiple knowledge sources interacting continuously and simultaneously. Grabe and Stoller explain, "The simple idea behind this view is that one can take useful ideas from a bottom-up perspective and combine them with key ideas from a top-down view" (p. 33). Some of the most famous models of interactive models are Rumelhart's. In his models, "a final hypothesis about the text is synthesized from multiple knowledge sources interacting continuously and simultaneously" (Alderson, 2000, p. 18). Though interactive models have been in vogue for a very long time, they are self-contradictory; the automatic processing aspects of comprehension coordinated in the working memory such as word recognition are incompatible with strong top-down controls on reading comprehension. For this reason, Grabe and Stoller suggest modifying the interactive models of reading in the sense that they will include "automatic processes, being carried out primarily in a bottom up manner with little interference from other higher processing levels or knowledge sources" (p. 33).

In short, knowledge about the text or the world learners possess and apply in reading is of paramount importance to reading comprehension. However, this knowledge seems to be insufficient since it must be backed by metacognitive knowledge—another important type of knowledge about the reading process learners should possess.

#### Metacognitive Knowledge

Anthony, Pearson, & Raphael (1993) explain that the term metacognition is associated with one's understanding and appropriate use of cognitive processes and strategies. They state that metacognitive processes

can be thought of as knowledge of self, knowledge of the task, and self-

monitoring or the knowing of “that” (declarative knowledge), knowing “how” (procedural knowledge), and knowing “when and why” (conditional knowledge). (p. 289)

Declarative knowledge involves what the readers know about the task of reading itself (i.e., that reading is a process, and that schemata are necessary). Procedural knowledge shows how to summarize or guess a tricky word meaning from context. As for conditional knowledge, it is concerned with the application of learned strategic knowledge. These three types of knowledge appear to develop through both experience and instruction. Studies and research like those described by Anthony, Pearson, & Raphael (1993), have shown that struggling and poor readers have limited, impaired understanding of the reading process as compared to fluent and capable readers. Poor readers didn’t know that reading silently is faster than reading aloud, or that recounting a story is more successfully done at gist level rather than at verbatim level. Worse still, poor readers were said in some of these studies “to have little awareness of the purpose of reading, [to] not notice blocks to comprehension, and [to] not employ effective fix-up strategies” (p. 290).

To boost awareness of strategic reading and the cognitive activities that underscore skilled reading, reading researchers, as Anthony et al. put it, “argue for process-into-content instruction” (p. 290). Here researchers advocate swerving away from traditional comprehension questions where the focus is on content in favor of teaching that instructs learners how to make use of knowledge about the reading process to make sense of text. Such an approach to teaching reading shows that when teachers talk explicitly about the reading processes and strategies, learners’ awareness of the conditional knowledge increases. An important, well-cited instructional strategic program designed to enhance readers’ metacomprehension, or comprehension monitoring, is Palincsar and Brown’s Reciprocal Teaching which will be discussed in the section about teaching reading strategies (Hewitt, 1995).

In short one of the options open to enhancing reading comprehension is through boosting metacognitive knowledge through teaching that focuses on purposive learning of strategies as well as a deep understanding of conditions under which application of learned strategies would lead to better comprehension.

## Reading as a Mental Process

Though what we do (mental processes) when we read is still not fully understood, some researchers argue that “when we are reading, we are clearly engaged in a great deal of activity, some of it automatic, some of it conscious” (Alderson, 2004, p. 14). Likewise, Grabe and Stoller (2002) suggest that two main reading processes are activated in our mind when we read: lower-level processes and higher-level processes.

Lower-level processes are rapid and automatic and are the most fundamental requirement for fluent reading comprehension (lexical access). Many L1 researchers believe that comprehension cannot be carried out for a long time without word recognition skills. In the L2 context little discussion is given to this topic, partly because these skills need intensive exposure to print and a great deal of reading practice, and according to Grabe and Stoller (2002), it is extremely difficult to provide L2 learners with “the time, resources, and practice needed to develop a very large recognition vocabulary” (p. 21). However, this shouldn’t be an excuse for ignoring developing word recognition abilities in L2 contexts.

In addition to word recognition, a fluent reader, according to Grabe and Stoller, is able to parse texts and “recognize phrasal groupings, word ordering information, and superordinate relations among clauses quickly” (p. 22). These two researchers argue that L2 students need a great deal of exposure to comprehensible print “if they are to develop automaticity in using information from grammatical structures to assist them in reading” (p. 23). The third process that contributes to fluent reading and happens automatically is semantic proposition formation or “the process of combining word meaning and structural information in basic clause-level meaning units” (p. 24). If these processes function well, they work together effortlessly in working memory (short-term memory).

Higher-level processes stored in our minds as procedural knowledge are a set of processes that show what we think of as we read for comprehension. Grabe and Stoller (2002) argue that “beyond understanding and interpreting the ideas represented by the text, we establish purposes for reading, combine reading strategies as needed, make inferences of many types, [and] draw extensively on background knowledge” (p. 25). At this level, the clause-unit level meanings formed from drawing on information from syntactic parsing and semantic proposition formation are added to a

growing network of ideas from the text. The higher-level process consists of two levels: text level where the reader tries to make meaning of what the writer wants to convey and situation level where the reader interprets that information according to his or her own purposes.

In short, the higher level processes combined with the lower-level ones form the basis for any successful reading comprehension. Reading for explicit simple information will require emphasis on lower-level processes, and reading for general information will lead to emphasis on higher-level processes. Following this, Grabe and Stoller (2002) conclude that “Reading comprehension is an extraordinarily feat of balancing and coordinating many abilities in a very complex and rapid set of routines that makes comprehension a seemingly effortless and enjoyable activity for fluent readers” (p. 29). But, are reading teachers aware of the importance of this combination of higher and lower level processes in reading comprehension and meaning construction?

#### Dilemmas in Teaching Reading Comprehension

Researchers such as Alderson (2004) and Weir (1997) argue that nowadays teachers are doing little comprehension instruction in their classrooms; they are testing their students’ comprehension rather than teaching them how to construct meaning on their own. Such an approach to teaching comprehension which focuses on telling instead of coaching stems from teachers’ unfamiliarity with strategic reading instruction, and from the use of display comprehension questions which do not encourage students to think critically and be strategic. So, teachers need to teach their students how to make meaning, to interact with the reading, to infer, to evaluate, and to be active readers. This can be done through careful questioning techniques that make students use varied reading skills and strategies. Also, one of the most important considerations that teachers need to bear in mind and be careful about is the way questions should be phrased. When constructing questions, teachers need to use different words from what is actually used in the text. More interestingly, teachers should use varied questions to cover, as Alderson (2004) puts it, all of the three levels of understanding. He argues that such a distinction between a literal understanding of text (reading the lines), an understanding of meanings that is not directly stated in the text (reading between the lines), and an understanding of the main implications of text (reading beyond the lines) should be clear in the mind of the reading teacher. Weir

(1997) argues in a similar vein for exposing students to and teaching them how to answer what he calls explicit, implicit, and inferential questions. What should be done in each of these levels is best summarized in the table below.

Table 1. Reading Levels

Reading for explicit ideas	Reading for implicit ideas	Reading for pragmatic inferences
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● It is an important purpose for reading.</li> <li>● Students need to decode the whole of a text to understand all.</li> <li>● The text is read in a linear and sequential fashion.</li> <li>● It mainly relies on bottom-up processing.</li> <li>● activities may include:               <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Separating explicitly stated main ideas from supporting detail.</li> <li>2. Understanding the development of an argument and/or logical organization.</li> </ol> </li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● The reader uses explicit statements to form an inference without recourse to knowledge from outside the text (propositional inferences).</li> <li>● Reading Questions typically begin with WH/question words.</li> <li>● activities may include:               <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Discovering writer's intention.</li> <li>2. Understanding writer's attitude to the topic.</li> <li>3. Identifying the addressee.</li> <li>4. Distinguishing fact from fiction.</li> </ol> </li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Pragmatic inferencing takes place when readers rely mainly on their schemata and opinions to interpret a text.</li> <li>● activities may include:               <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Pragmatic informational inferences typically answering WH/questions.</li> <li>2. Pragmatic explanatory inferences which are concerned with motivation and cause and begin with why and how.</li> <li>3. Pragmatic evaluative inferences where the reader makes an evaluation on the basis of the content of a text.</li> </ol> </li> </ul>

(Adapted from Weir, 1997)

As has been discussed above, reading comprehension instruction is plagued by the lack of teaching students how to extract meaning from what they read. This can be avoided by training teachers how to teach reading strategically and by accompanying texts with comprehension questions that can cover the three levels of reading comprehension suggested by Weir (1997). Such questions may encourage learners to read and use reading strategies such as skimming, inferring, making thematic connections, distinguishing facts from fictions; and comprehend what they read. But, are reading strategies acquired only indirectly through reading classes or can be learnt through explicit instruction?

### Reading Strategies

#### Background, Definition, Classification

Searching the literature on reading strategies history, definition, and classification, I discovered that these strategies were first discussed as a part of all the learning strategies used in learning and acquiring L2. This is best illustrated in *Language Learning Strategies* (Oxford, 1990), a seminal classic in the learning strategies field, and *Learning Strategies in Second language Acquisition* (O'Malley & Chamot, 1990). Alderson (2000) argues that these “strategies are not directly relevant to the study of reading.... Nevertheless, there are ways in which the categories of language-learning or language use strategies developed in other areas might be relevant to an understanding of reading” (p. 309). It may be useful to initially discuss reading strategies as a component of learning strategies and then see how they are discussed separately on their own.

Oxford (1990) asserts that people have actually been using reading strategies together with other learning strategies for a very long time. She defines learning strategies as “operations employed by the learner to aid the acquisition, storage, retrieval, and use of information” (p. 8). O'Malley and Chamot (1990) go further to give a broad description of learning strategies. In their view, using learning strategies, the language learner may focus on selected aspects of new information, analyze and monitor these aspects during acquisition, organize or elaborate on them during the encoding process, and evaluate the learning when it is completed. Thus, according to O'Malley and Chamot, “strategies may have an affective or conceptual basis, and may influence the learning of simple tasks, such as learning vocabulary or items in a list, or complex tasks, such as language comprehension or language production” (p. 43).

Grabe and Stoller (1992) define reading strategies as “a set of abilities under conscious control of the reader used to achieve particular goals” (p. 15). This definition is echoed in Anderson’s (1999) work on reading. He conducted research on reading strategies, classified them as (1) metacognitive strategies, (2) cognitive strategies, and (3) compensating reading strategies, and came up with a list of twenty-four reading strategies.

(1) Metacognitive strategies (thinking about your thinking/planning) are defined by O’Malley and Chamot (1990) as “higher order executive skills that may entail planning for, monitoring or evaluating the success of a learning activity” (p. 44). Under this category, Anderson (1999) found that readers “[make] lists of relevant vocabulary to prepare for new reading” (p. 82), seize opportunities to practice what they already know to keep their progress steady, and assess what they have learned.

(2) Cognitive strategies (thinking)

According to O’Malley and Chamot, in this category, the learner “interacts with the material to be learned by manipulating it mentally or physically” (p. 197). Cognitive strategies operate directly on incoming information, manipulating it in ways that enhance learning. Elaborating on cognitive strategies, Anderson came up with these ten reading strategies, some of which are “predicting the content of an upcoming passage or section of the text” (p. 83), using grammar to help understand unfamiliar constructions, skimming, and expanding vocabulary and grammar to help increase reading. Also, when reading, Anderson found that readers guess the meanings of unfamiliar words or phrases to let them use what they already know about English, “[analyze] theme, style and connections to improve comprehension” (p.83), write a short summary of what they read, and “[break] down larger phrases into smaller parts to help understand difficult passages” (p. 83 ).

(3) Compensating reading strategies help readers understand and remember information about the print by relying on other non-textual, compensating tools of comprehension. According to Anderson (1999), the compensating strategies readers use are: relying on what they schemata to improve their reading comprehension, “[taking] notes to help recall important details” (p. 83), trying to recall what they understand from a readings to help them develop better comprehension skills, reviewing the purpose and tone of a reading passage so they can remember more

effectively, and picturing scenes in their minds to remember and understand what they read.

### Skill/Strategy Distinction

Reading strategies are often referred to in many reading books as skills, as if they were interchangeable. Grabe and Stoller (2002) comment on this by saying, “For us, skills represent linguistic processing abilities that are relatively automatic.... Strategies are often defined as a set of abilities under conscious control of the reader, though this common definition is not likely to be true” (p. 15). The problem with this definition, as Grabe and Stoller argue, is that many reading abilities that are commonly considered to be strategies, such as skimming and scanning, are relatively automatic in their use by good, efficient readers, and “thus the distinction between skills and strategies is not entirely clear” (p. 15). As a way to make clear where skills end and strategies start, other researchers propose two chief differences between skills and strategies: automaticity and intentionality. For them, skills are the routinized, automatic procedures readers unconsciously use when they engage in a routine task. Skimming, for example, can fit under the skill category for fluent readers and strategy for struggling readers (Grabe & Stoller, 2002). Paris, Cross, and Lipson, (1991) best unearth the contrasts surrounding skills and strategies when they argue:

Skills refer to information-processing that are automatic... [they] are applied to a text unconsciously for many reasons including expertise, repeated practice, compliance with directions, luck and naïve use. In contrast, strategies are actions selected deliberately to achieve particular goals. An emerging skill can become a strategy when it is used intentionally. Likewise, a strategy can [be internalized] and become a skill. Indeed strategies are more efficient and developmentally advanced when they become generated and applied automatically as skills. Thus, strategies are skills under consideration (in Grabe and Stoller, p. 16).

### Are Reading Strategies Teachable?

Before the 1970's reading research and instruction was influenced by the behavioral tradition to reading comprehension (Anthony, Pearson, & Raphael, 1993). According to these researchers “behaviorism emphasized the study of observable behavior of events. Since the reading process was considered to be primarily a mental event, it was viewed as a phenomenon outside the scope of experimental psychology”

(p. 283). Only those aspects of reading that were observable became the focus of reading research. Following this, only decoding and other observable aspects of reading were taught and tested. However, these days reading has become the focus of cognitive psychology and “considered to be a form of problem solving, [has begun] to be studied by psychologists, linguists, and reading educators” (p. 283). Reading lower level processes, such as word recognition, and higher level processes have been researched and been proved to be teachable. Nowadays, there’s a shared agreement that instruction or learning of L2 rules, skills, and strategies can be very helpful for L2 learners. Ellis (1997) argues against the researchers who believe that “learned knowledge is completely separate and cannot be converted to acquired knowledge” (p. 356), explaining that explicit instruction, if accompanied by long-term practice and training, may convert into implicit knowledge and contribute to students’ autonomy in language learning. Formal and continual practicing of language rules and forms enables already-learnt explicit knowledge to be automatized.

The developments in cognitive psychology and studies of language acquisition in the last fifteen years have had a great impact on language learning and have given teachers a wide choice in teaching L2 practices. Such developments have shifted reading researchers’ attention “from the results of reading instruction to the act of reading itself .... Readers’ answers to questions became less important to researchers than tracing the thought processes that led to these answers” (Early & Ericson, 1993 p. 313). Consistent with these observations, Dowhower (1999) states that “during the 1980’s and into the early 1990’s, a strong cognitively focused research base suggested comprehension strategies are important components of expert reading and can be taught” (p. 677).

In spite of the importance of reading strategies in meaning construction, reading literature and research report that little strategy instruction is taking place in reading classes. Dowhower (1999) reports the teaching of cognitive strategies in contemporary classrooms is still rare. To add to the problem, Dowhower reports that studies conducted by researchers in the late 1970s showed that teachers were testing comprehension instead of teaching it and explaining how to comprehend. Similarly nowadays, research shows that reading instruction textbooks give minimal assistance in how to teach students to use strategies (Dowhower, 1999). Given that reading strategies are important in reading comprehension, how should they be instructed?

## How Reading Strategies Should Be Taught

Before examining some of the popular ways in which reading strategies are assessed and instructed, a review of the literature on the strategies that are effective and deserve teaching is in order.

### The What

There is a wide array of reading strategies with varying degrees of importance. To be considered effective and essential, a strategy, as Barton and Sawyer (2004) put it, “must be powerful i.e., very effective in promoting understanding, and relatively ubiquitous i.e., applicable to a wide array of texts, including difficult ones” (p. 336). Barton and Sawyer reached this conclusion after reflecting on the reading strategies used by Sawyer (a teacher and author) with her young learners. They found that ten comprehension strategies met the criteria previously discussed. Based on her students’ instructional needs and the texts she has chosen for her students, Sawyer classified these ten strategies in an interesting way, placing the literal, textual, and easy-to-apply ones such as scanning, organizing certain events into a particular chronological order, comparing and contrasting, and summarizing at the bottom of a chart. Other inference, abstract strategies like making predictions, inferring, and making thematic connections were placed at the top of the chart.

Such a classification treating literal strategies as less important compared to inference strategies is reminiscent of Nuttall’s (1982) description of question types. In her analysis, Nuttall valued the indirect questions consistent with higher level reading strategies (levels 3, 4, and 5) at the expense of literal questions going with lower level strategies (levels 1 and 2).

Table 2. Reading Questions/Strategies Classification

1	Literal comprehension a. recognition (identifying main ideas, locating details strategies...) b. recall (describing, listing details, recalling events strategies...)
2	Reorganization (comparing, classifying, summarizing strategies...)
3	Inferential (predicting, drawing conclusion, inferring strategies...)
4	Evaluation (making a considered judgment about the text...)
5	Appreciation (reacting to the content of the text,..)

(Based on Nuttall, 1982)

Barton and Sawyer (2004) and Nuttall's (1982) views prioritizing and admitting the superiority of indirect, referential questions requiring readers to use referential strategies imply giving more room to the teaching of these tools. Reading strategies research is consistent with these views and suggests that higher level questions generate interaction, deepen understanding, and engage students in thinking about what they read.

#### The How (Strategy Assessment)

Prior to immersing students in strategic reading courses, research suggests that teachers should diagnose their students' knowledge of reading strategies through diverse techniques. Also, research shows reading teachers can utilize these techniques during a reading strategies course to track their students' progress and detect their areas of difficulties in understanding and applying the strategies in-focus.

Oxford (1990) suggests that “some of the most important strategy assessment techniques include observations, interviews, ‘think-aloud’ procedures, note-taking, diaries, or journals, and self-report surveys” (p. 193). Observations are one way to gather strategy data. Though not very efficient in tracking invisible thinking processes and reading processes, observation is very helpful in the case of observable reading behaviors such as cooperating with peers. Oxford points out that while observation cannot help teachers observe invisible strategies, interviews and think-aloud procedures can make the unobservable reading processes and skills visible. Interview models help teachers “gather data on unobservable mental processes” (p. 195). Teachers can ask a student to read and let “his or her thoughts flow verbally in a stream-of-consciousness fashion without trying to control, direct, or observe him/her” (p. 195) to describe what he or she is doing to accomplish the task. Other forms of self-reports are diaries or journals which permit learners to record their difficulties, thoughts, achievements, and feelings and to keep track of their strategy use. Another efficient way to assess students' strategies is self-report surveys. These surveys can be “less-structured” or “more structured” (p. 199). In the first type, learners can be asked to answer open-ended questions to freely describe their language learning strategies. Though less structured surveys provide a wealth of information, their results may be difficult to categorize and draw data from. This drawback is not found in the more structured surveys, the second type, where learners can be asked to answer “multiple-choice questions which can be objectively scored and analyzed” (p. 199).

While Oxford's (1990) strategy assessment procedures are suitable to all of the learning strategies and focus primarily on interviews, Brown's (2004) strategy assessment work is directed to reading only. Examining questions accompanying a reading passage delivered from a TOEFL test, Brown found that many of these questions "are consistent with strategies of effective reading [like] skimming for main idea, scanning for details, guessing word meanings from context, inferencing, [and] using discourse markers" (p. 206). For this reason, Brown believes that "the assessment of reading can imply the assessment of a storehouse of reading strategies" (p. 188). Brown's conception is shared by Rogers (1996) who examined questions of some reading subcomponents of a number of TOEFL tests, grouped them under different reading strategies, and divided his book *TOEFL Success* into different sections, each of which focused on a particular strategy (see Table 3).

Table 3. Examples of Reading Strategies Consistent with Reading Comprehension Questions

Corresponding Strategy	Type of Question	Sample Questions
Skimming	Main idea	"What's the main idea of the passage?" "What's the passage primarily about?"
	Main Topic	
	Main purpose questions	
Scanning	Specific information	"According to the passage, how many strings does...?" "Where in the passage does the author first discuss...?"
	Place in the passage where a topic is mentioned	
	Inference questions	
Inferencing	Inference questions	"The author implies that which of the following is true?" "Which of the following can be inferred from the passage?"
Guessing words meaning	Vocabulary-in-context questions	"The word '—' in line 5 is closest in meaning to..."

(Adapted from Rogers, 1996, p. 268)

Rogers (1996) argues that TOEFL tests reading comprehension questions are consistent with classic reading strategies, and in asking students to answer these

questions, we are, indirectly, assessing their familiarity and mastery of these strategies. Following this, he suggests that students can improve their reading abilities and enhance their tests scores if they get acquainted with the classic reading strategies and keep practicing them one by one through TOEFL-like test exercise types.

Once the learning strategies assessment is done and analyzed, teachers must provide their students with the results of the assessment because learners are usually curious to know something new about their learning styles and abilities (Oxford, 1990). Also such discussions following the students' strategy assessment may sensitize struggling readers to their weaknesses in applying reading strategies in comprehension and may make them aware of the necessity to learn from their teachers' remedial or learning strategies courses. As for good readers, such a discussion may enrich and consolidate their reading abilities. So, the data drawn from the assessments of learners' reading strategic knowledge can, partly, shed light on the areas where the readers' need more intervention and reinforcement and can help teachers decide on the appropriate reading strategies approach suitable for their learners.

#### Reading Strategies Teaching Models

Researching approaches of teaching reading strategies, Oxford (1990) argues that learning strategies can be taught through consciousness training. Such an approach suggests that teachers raise their learners' awareness of and familiarity with specific reading strategies through different tasks and activities. To this end, Oxford suggests the "Embedded Strategies Game" and the "Strategy Search Game" activities (p. 24).

The Embedded Strategies Game helps participants become familiar with language learning strategies. In it, teachers can ask students to "determine which language learning strategies [from a list previously given by the teacher] are embedded in or suggested by, certain language activities" (p. 24). Thanks to it, students become acquainted with the whole system of language learning strategies through matching a number of language activities with the names of the appropriate, relevant strategies.

The list of activities for this game covers all the four language skills. The following are examples of the language activities that should be matched with the relevant reading strategies:

1. LOOKING AHEAD—Use preview questions or other ways to look ahead at the new target language reading material, so that you can orient yourself.
2. MARKERS—In reading the new language, look for markers in the text (headings, subheadings, topic sentences) to give you clues about the meaning.
3. T-TIME—Take note of what you hear or read in the new language by drawing a big T on the paper, writing the key idea or title at the top of the T, then listing details in the left column and examples in the right column. (pp. 28- 29)

These language activities can be matched with previewing, skimming, and taking notes and summarizing. Oxford suggests that this game, which takes 1 to 2 hours, can be spread over several class periods and proceeds in the following way. First, the teacher needs to give out to students handouts including a list of language activities like the ones mentioned above and explain how the game works. Second, the should run through one or two examples to model the whole game. Third, he or she divides the class into groups, and asks them to match the language activities with the relevant reading strategies and justify their choices. Fourth, groups report on their answers, and then all the students participate in a class discussion evaluating each other's strategy choices. Though intended to be used at the beginning of a reading strategies course, this Embedded Strategies Game, can be used to check the students' understanding and mastery of the newly taught strategies.

The second game designed by Oxford (Strategy Search Game) helps students “determine which language learning strategies are embedded in, or suggested by, certain language tasks/situations” (p. 30). This game is a little more complicated than the previous embedded strategies game. The Strategy Search Game helps learners gain a more in-depth look at the whole range of strategies. Like the preceding game, the tasks/situations presented by the writer cover all the four language skills, but given the focus on reading strategies, I quote the following situation:

NEWSWORTHY: You are a French student learning English in France. You try to read the International Herald Tribune regularly so you practice English, but you keep getting stuck on unfamiliar words. You use a dictionary to find

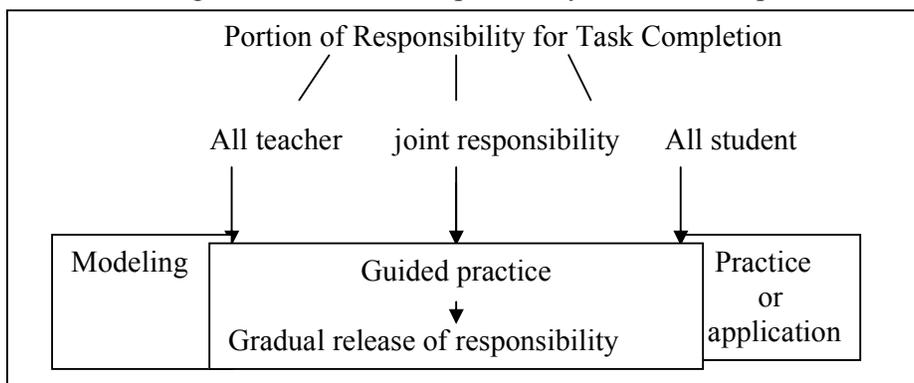
out the meaning of every word you don't know, but that slows you down too much, and not all the words are in the dictionary, anyway! It is very upsetting to have such difficulty, and you are about to give up. Which language learning strategies do you need to use? (p. 33)

Here the learner needs to say that s/he has to resort to guessing word meanings through context. The game is taught in nearly the same way as the Embedded Strategies Game.

Another way suggested by Oxford (1993) to teach reading strategies is the implicit strategy training where students are given information “on the value of a strategy, when it can be used, how to use it, and how to evaluate [its] success” (p. 203) and are given the chance to practice it either once or over a whole course. This method, despite its name, is similar to many current approaches embracing the explicit instructional model dominating the field of teaching reading strategies these days. According to Anthony, Pearson, and Raphael (1993), “this [explicit instructional] model centers around the transfer of control of the reading process from the teacher (the experienced reader) to the student (the naïve reader)” (p. 300).

Many concepts are at the heart of this view of teaching: (1) explicit explanation, (2) modeling, and (3) scaffolding. The Explicit Instruction Model is best illustrated in Figure 2.

Figure 2. Portion of Responsibility for Task Completion



(Adapted from Anthony et al., 1993, p. 301)

In the above framework, first, teachers explain and model the desired application of the target strategy and thus take all the responsibility for task completion, and then they invite students individually or cooperatively to practice

using the strategy in focus under their supervision and control. This guided practice helps bring about the transition from total teacher responsibility to total student responsibility. Third, when students master the targeted strategy, they start taking all the responsibility in practicing and applying it independently.

In the explicit explanation teachers are focusing on the declarative, procedural, and conditional knowledge necessary for effective strategy use, i.e., telling students about the nature of the strategy in focus, why it should be learned, how it should be used, when and where it is used, and how to evaluate its use and mastery (Anthony et al., 1993). This concept is based, as Anthony and his colleagues put it, “on the assumption that students learn what they are taught; thus, if we wish them to understand the purpose as well as the procedures for a particular strategy, we must inform them of both” (p. 302). A remarkable part of this model is the concept modeling.

Modeling, also referred to as mental modeling by Duffy, Roehler, and Herrmann (1988), or cognitive modeling by other researchers, derives its importance from verbalizing the invisible mental processes which are at the heart of reading. Reasoning processes such as activating prior knowledge, predicting, and guessing made by the reader are invisible and unobservable, and it is the responsibility of the teacher (the expert) to make them explicit and observable for students (the novice readers) (Anthony et al. 1993). Besides, modeling is, as Duffy, Roehler, and Hermann (1988) explain, particularly important for struggling readers, “whose background knowledge about what reading is and how it works is sparse” (p. 762), since it supplies them with explicit information and thus reduces the instructional ambiguity plaguing teaching reading comprehension. In order to be of optimum value, modeling should focus on physical demonstration as well as the mental processes of task performance (Duffy et al., 1988). Also, Duffy et al. argue that after modeling, teachers must check their students' understandings of the modeled strategies. They conclude that to accomplish mental modeling, teachers must do the following:

- present the strategy in the context of connected text
- describe mental maneuvers illustrative of reasoning processes
- provide examples which communicate that flexibility of thinking, and
- intersperse modeling with student opportunities for expression

so that their reasoning, when reading, can be observed and elaborative instructional information provided as needed.

(p. 766)

The last point corresponds to what is described in the Explicit Instruction Model as scaffolding or guided practice.

Scaffolded instruction has been coined, as Anthony et al. (1993) describe it, to underline the temporary, adjustable, and guided aspects of teaching. Anthony et al. think “Like a scaffold, the teacher’s role in acquisition of new concepts is to provide the appropriate amount of support needed by the learner to implement a skill or strategy” (p. 302). Over time the instructor makes gradual attempts to withdraw the process and remove the support initially provided, leaving the scene for students to try their luck in applying the newly-modeled strategies independently. So, successful scaffolding may result in developing autonomous readers who can apply new strategies on their own across a variety of contexts. Scaffolding, explicit explanation, as well as modeling, are clearly observed in some of the approaches that tried to enhance students’ metacognitive knowledge or comprehension monitoring like the Reciprocal teaching (RT) and the Informed Strategies for learning (ISL).

Reciprocal Teaching was first introduced by Palincsar and Brown (1984) as a strategy to enhance students’ comprehension of the text while involving them in a verbal exchange of their ideas. Hewitt (1995) argues that readers “reciprocate their skills, experiences, and understanding as they follow the model” (p. 29). This model focuses on “four skill areas to activate and monitor reading comprehension: (a) summarizing, (b) questioning, (c) clarifying, and (d) predicting” (p. 29). The process starts with the teacher modeling the steps of RT. S/he summarizes the target text and asks students a text-related question. Then, students in turn ask a question about the teacher’s question for the sake of clarification. Finally, the teacher and the students predict what will come next (Hewitt, 1995). Each student in the group, then, takes a turn at being “teacher” to use these four strategies and receives guidance and feedback from the teacher and classmates. Gradually the teacher leads the students to apply the RT strategies successfully until they become proficient and ready to be strategic on their own and be independent in monitoring their comprehension. A close look at this model reveals a wide array of benefits for students: First, students gain cognitive and metacognitive knowledge of reading comprehension while observing the four skills of

RT performed by an “expert.” Second, students employ interactive techniques that are linguistically and socially appropriate (Hewitt, 1995).

The explicit teaching of strategies found in RT is very much like the strategy instruction echoed in the Informed Strategies for Learning program (ISL) which was developed by Paris, Cross, and Lipson (1984). This program aims at enhancing students’ metacognitive knowledge through engaging them in explicit instruction in strategy use in a curriculum developed specifically to meet that purpose.

Most recently, consistent with what has been described, in rethinking the research on strategy instruction, experts, as reported by Dowhower (1999), argue for “learning a repertoire of strategies as well as the coordination and flexible orchestration of those strategies” (p. 677). Put simply, learners have to build a repertoire of diverse, interrelated, and contextualized comprehension strategies. She also reports that the general thrust of different reading theories, such as the Reader Response Theory, and the English Motivation and Engagement Theory is that reading strategies “are best learned through teacher-student and peer-led discussions and explanatory responses during reading” (p. 6). Dowhower best sums up this explicit, contextualized approach when she states that “demonstrations of new strategies [modeling] and comments that reinforce existing strategies are woven into the ebb and flow of discussion of literature by both teachers and students” (p. 677).

The importance of modeling or verbal reports is highlighted by Anderson (1999) who argues that “the application of verbal reports to the L2 classroom provides an opportunity for a teaching of metacognitive awareness strategies in all language skills” (p. 77). To this end, he proposed ten steps for teachers. First, teachers should select an unseen passage, and second, read it loudly and “demonstrate the think-aloud procedure” (p. 77). While reading aloud, they should demonstrate in a natural way what is going on in their mind, thus showing thinking processes and modeling diverse strategies such as skimming, guessing, and making predictions. Third, teachers should, at the end of their models, encourage their students to add any of their own thoughts that occurred to them during their reading. Fourth, teachers provide additional reports if necessary. Fifth, students should be grouped into pairs or threes and work together to practice thinking aloud. Students should be encouraged to “verbalize their thoughts and the strategies that they are using during the reading” (p. 77) and to listen to each other. Sixth, listeners are invited to add their thoughts to their

classmate's modeling. Seventh, "the activity can be done in reading round robin format" (p. 77) where each student reads a sentence and verbalizes his/her invisible reading processes and the strategies used. In the eighth step, students can apply the "hot seat activity [where] one student can be asked to read a short passage and think aloud while the others in the class follow along silently" (p. 77). Also, as step 9, the think-aloud activity can be applied to regular silent reading periods. Teachers can interrupt a student's silent reading and ask him/her to verbalize what is going on in his/her mind. Finally, students should practice this activity outside the classroom and complete a checklist to report the strategies they use.

The use of this technique in reading classes aids students to, as Anderson (1999) puts it, "be taught how to be more aware of what they are doing and to see what other readers do when they encounter difficulties" (p. 78). In discussing either teachers' or students' verbal reports, students are informed on how good readers read, i.e., what to choose as efficient reading strategies, and when to apply them. The explicit instruction proved to be rewarding for the teaching of reading strategies such as skimming and inferring and for text-attack strategies such as using reference words, determining cause and effect, and taking advantage of the target text patterns of organization.

Yue (1993) argues that teaching readers how to take advantage of the cohesive chains and organizational patterns can equip students with effective reading strategies such as the ones mentioned above and improve their EFL reading. This view is shared by Mikulecky and Jeffries (1986) who incorporated four types of patterns of organization—listing, time order, cause-effect, comparison, and the referential chain--as teaching objectives in their reading course book entitled *Reading Power*. They believe that teachers should help learners pay attention to the patterns of organization of the target text because this will help them understand and remember what they read. In a similar vein, in her article "Instruction in Reading Comprehension for Primary-grade Students: A Focus on Text Structure", Williams (2005) argues that more emphasis on text signals and patterns should be given when we want to deal with younger children or those at risk of academic failure. With struggling readers, lower-level strategies and text structure explicit instruction, as opposed to strategic instruction of a highly metacognitive nature emphasizing reflection and self-monitoring, is necessary. Williams (2005) argues that "well-structured text enhances

recall and comprehension for those who have acquired sensitivity to structure. [Also, teaching] students to recognize the underlying structure of text improves comprehension” (p. 7). So, to help students become fluent readers, she states that teachers must explicitly teach them to identify the important patterns of organization of texts for better comprehension and interpretation and to differentiate between different types of text. Students need to know that “narrative texts typically follow a single general pattern, often called story grammar, and expository texts come in a variety of patterns (e.g., description, sequence, compare-contrast, cause-effect, and problem-solving” (p. 7).

While teaching students to use comprehension (reading and text-attack) strategies is important, encouraging them to use, consolidate, and transfer them to other subjects outside the classroom seem to be quite significant as well.

#### Reinforcing Reading Strategies through Reflection

Recently, reading experts and teachers have emphasized the importance of making learners self assess their newly studied comprehension strategies. In this context, reading teachers, as Dowhower (1999) reports, “use self-report rubrics, checklists, and portfolio entries to help students document and monitor personal strategies in flight” (p. 680). By asking students to reflect on and evaluate their increasing use of strategies inside and outside the classroom, teachers will help them consolidate the newly acquired strategies and practice older ones. In this context Janzen (1996) encouraged her students, while teaching them a strategic reading course, to do home readings and keep a record of what they read by completing a reading running log (see Appendix B.5). She believes that strategy use should be reinforced through homework readings. The list with its “evaluation” and “strategies used” columns require students to read in an attentive and thoughtful manner. In a similar vein, Anderson (1999) reports that an experienced teacher, asked to give insights into the techniques he uses with his learners to make them aware of and practice their reading strategies, says that “classroom work needs to be augmented by homework as well as practice in other regular education classes” (p. 74). To this end, he asked them to keep a running log of reading done in other classes, and then from time to time students were asked to share their logs with the whole class.

## How Reading Strategies Are Put into Practice

After being recognized by many teachers and reading researchers, the reading strategies theory has been, since the 1980s, put into practice and translated into many reading course books. The reading books that are strategy-oriented and widely used in the USA and some EFL private schools in the UAE are examined below.

Like Tapestry Reading series in general, *Tapestry Reading 4, Middle East Edition* (Sokolik, 2005) refers to reading strategies as language learning strategies and introduces them prior to reading in a section called “Getting Ready to Read.” In this pre-reading stage the writer usually defines the strategy, and explains how, when, and why it is used.

After that, students are given the chance to apply the newly learnt strategy while reading. Finally, in a section called “Putting It All Together” at the end of every chapter, the students are made to use all the newly-acquired reading strategies or skills, as Oxford (2005) refers to them, through different reading tasks and activities.

The *Reading Power* (Mikulecky & Jeffries, 1986) course book has four parts with reading-related titles such as reading for pleasure and reading comprehension skills. This latter part consists of ten units covering reading strategies like previewing and predicting and finding the pattern of organization. Each unit is centred on one strategy. The writer first defines the strategy and says why it is useful, then illustrates through one or two examples. After that, he engages the reader in a number of exercises (between four and ten), going from simple to complex to ensure full understanding. This book can be beneficial for high intermediate and higher levels learners and can be used with a teacher or independently as it is clear and easy to learn from. Most of the reading texts presented here are short and easy to help the learner focus on the strategy and not be blocked by difficult lexical items. This is not true of all the reading books, such as *Interactions Two: A Reading Skill Book*, which uses long and difficult texts.

*Interactions Two: A Reading Skill Book* (Kirn & Hartmann, 1997) is a twelve-chapter book which has thematic titles like “Education and Student Life,” and introduces and teaches reading strategies such as summarising and making predictions. Each chapter is composed of four parts. The first and second parts are reserved for reading selections, the third part is usually devoted to building vocabulary and study skills, and the fourth part is entitled “Reading in The Real

World.” All the units are rich with varied readings, pictures, and diverse strategies. In unit seven, for instance, students skim a long text for main ideas, revise and practice the ways that help them guess the meaning of difficult words through context in nine short exercises, and try to understand a text with the help of its structure. In addition, in this unit, students practice idioms, make inferences, learn about prefixes and suffixes to use them in guessing word meanings, and finally scan a reading for specific information. In every part, strategies are presented and defined as new ones through easy examples or revised and applied to new situations for more consolidation and understanding. Kirn and Hartmann (1997), the authors of this book, believe that learning strategies can be presented separately but should not be divorced from other reading skills in practice. In addition, students should be given the opportunities to practice the newly taught strategies repeatedly so that they can understand and remember them. This reading skill book can be a valuable course book for high intermediate and higher level students; however, it can be an interesting source for low advanced and higher levels students who want to learn on their own and know more about reading strategies.

While these books are primarily strategy-oriented, the *Elements of Literature* reading course book (Beer & Anderson, 2003) embeds the reading skills in its texture. A total of twenty strategies are defined, highlighted, and repeatedly practiced throughout this instructional book.

These reading strategies books are samples of many other interesting books hinging around reading strategies and are in no way the best in this field. I chose to discuss them here because they are widely used in some private high schools and many higher educational institutions in the UAE. The rationale behind these reading course books' interest in reading strategies stems from the importance and efficiency of these strategies in meaning construction.

#### Benefits and Rationale behind Teaching Reading Strategies

For learners

An ancient proverb says, “Give a man a fish and he eats for a day. Teach him how to fish and he eats for a lifetime.” In the area of teaching reading, this proverb means that instead of checking our students’ answers to reading questions and giving them the right solutions (telling), we need to teach them how to use reading strategies

to help them comprehend the text and find the right answers (coaching). In this way a lifelong benefit will take place from teaching comprehension strategies.

Also another “rationale for teaching comprehension strategies is that readers derive more meaning from text when they engage in intentional thinking” (Williams, 2005, p. 7), i.e., when readers, face difficulties in comprehending what they have read, the use of some specific strategies will enhance their comprehension. Similarly, in her book *I Read It But I Don't Get It*, Tovani (2000) argues that if teachers engage students in what good strategic readers do, i.e., apply reading strategies, all the students can improve their reading; capable readers will practice their already acquired strategies and struggling readers will be taught how better to comprehend what they read. In agreement with this, Nagano (2000) found that reading strategies proved beneficial for her disabled readers after teaching them reading strategically. Besides Tovani claims that “strategies are applicable to all curriculum areas” (p. 109), and in order to explain this best, she mentions a very interesting anecdote featuring how a student discovered that strategies can be applied to many subjects: “One day Nelson asked his teacher, ‘Mr. Buddy, how come in math you ask us to estimate, and in science we hypothesize, and in reading we predict? Aren't these all the same strategies?’” (p. 109). Nelson helps us understand that meaning-maker strategies are really thinking strategies and are flexible in the sense that they can be used in various aspects of our life.

Moreover, advocates of strategy instruction may argue that students can benefit a lot from being taught reading strategies by their teachers, especially when they see their teachers model strategic reading activities in front of them. As Tovani (2000) suggests, “Teachers have to be aware of their own processes as readers. They can notice their own thinking as they read, determine what they do to make meaning, and pass these techniques on to their students” (p. 109).

Similarly, Taylor, Peterson, Pearson, and Rodriguez (2002) argue that strategies enhancing higher level thinking increase students' understanding of what they are doing and encourage them to be meaning makers and effective readers. Likewise, Anderson (2003) argues that higher level thinking helps develop students' inferring strategy which has been described as “central to the overall process of comprehension” (p. 293). Consistent with this, Baker (2002) suggests that teaching reading strategically helps us, as teachers, “develop reflective readers that continually

predict or anticipate upcoming events during their reading. Reflective readers think, ask questions about why characters or authors do or write what they do” (p. 20).

In a similar vein, Dowhower (1999) argues that thanks to reading strategy instruction, students will “know what they can do to figure out what they are reading” (p. 677). She also affirms, like Gebhard (1999), that strategies allow readers to be autonomous and in control of the comprehension process, and to be critical thinkers.

Reading strategies are so important and efficacious that they are incorporated as cornerstones of a framework for effective reading instruction programs maximizing cognitive engagement in literacy learning. This framework contains, as Taylor et al. (2002) state, reading activities supporting higher-level thinking, and encouraging independent use of comprehension strategies in reading activities. According to these researchers, when learners are engaged in higher level thinking about texts, they are making links to their schema, “considering thematic elements of the text, interpreting characters’ motives, and actions” (p. 271). Similarly, they argue that “during comprehension and word recognition, students are engaged in metacognitive thinking and monitoring as they try to solve reading problems” (p. 271).

#### For Teachers

Many of the researchers referred to in this literature review (e.g., Baker, 2002; Barton & Sawyer, 2004; Dowhower, 1999; Janzen, 2002; Nagano (2003)) are teacher researchers who wrote about action research, observations, and experiences relevant to teaching reading strategically. All these teacher researchers mentioned how they enjoyed dealing with reading strategies. So, to avoid repetition, I'll be brief in discussing the benefits teachers can reap from developing their learners' reading strategies.

Dowhower (1999) reports that teachers found that the “use of comprehension strategies was both a sign of active engagement and a stimulus for that engagement” (p. 677). Students become more proficient in comprehension thanks to teacher explanation and modeling of reading strategies and independent practice. Such strategy instruction focus helps, as Oxford (1990) reports, teach teachers new roles and beliefs and move them “from the role of ‘fountain of all knowledge’ to ‘facilitator of learning,’ and from the belief of ‘I’m here to tell you the way... [to] I’m here to help you’ (p. 220).

More importantly, strategic teachers are reported by reading research as effective teachers. Examining effective schools and teachers, Taylor, Peterson, Pearson, and Rodriguez (2002) learned that primary-grade effective teachers are those who provide higher level questioning, coach students in strategies for applying their word recognition skills to everyday readings, and allow students active reading practice. Effective teachers are those who avoid ‘telling’ and adhere to “coaching” when teaching reading classes. Learners should be risk-takers, active readers, and meaning makers instead of waiting for their teacher's answers. In addition, they found that “outstanding teachers taught skills, actively engaged students in a great deal of actual reading and writing, and fostered self-regulation in students’ use of strategies” (p. 272). Consistent with this, Dowhower (1999) included many teachers’ positive opinions on reading strategies instruction. Many, after instructing reading strategies, admitted that “their students approached [USA] proficiency tests more strategically and they were more efficacious in reading harder material” (p. 678).

In short, we can see how reading should be thought of as a remarkably intricate phenomenon that involves many processing skills that are integrated in very efficient combinations.

Also, research suggests that reading should be considered a dynamic and interactive process where both the text contribution (text structure) and the reader’s contribution (the reader’s schema) are essential for meaning construction. Focus on the target text structure and the visual aspects of reading are at the core of the bottom up reading models; however, reliance on the reader’s schema is central to the top-down models of reading comprehension. For optimal results, researchers call for an alternative model that combines these two previous reading approaches—the interactive reading model. This knowledge about the text and the world should be backed by metacognitive knowledge, another sort of knowledge about the reading process learners should possess. But in spite of all the research reading has received in the last twenty years, reading instruction is still lagging behind. In fact researchers argue that nowadays teachers are doing little comprehension. To remedy such a situation many researchers and teacher researchers call for instructing reading mainly by accompanying texts with questions consistent with effective reading strategies to help teachers instruct reading strategies to their learners.

But before teaching reading strategies teachers need to assess their learners' knowledge of these strategies to better meet their needs. Such an investigation can be carried out through many methods including interviews, questionnaires, and reading tests. Reading researchers such as Brown (2004) and Rogers (1996) believe that the assessment of reading can imply the investigation of reading strategies.

As for teaching reading strategies, relevant research and reading course books support the use of the Explicit Reading Model which has proved efficient in teaching reading strategically. Such instruction can contribute to the learners' growth in reading.

This review helped me tailor the strategic reading course (the treatment) for the participating students in this study. Like what has been suggested by reading research, I will assess the participants through standardized reading tests and instruct reading strategies explicitly. I will also help the participants gain knowledge of the interactive models of reading by helping them use reading strategies consistent with bottom-up as well as top-down approaches to reading. Besides, as the participants are struggling readers, I will consider teaching them lower as well as higher level strategies.

## CHAPTER 3 METHODOLOGY

### Theoretical Perspectives

As was discussed in chapter 2, a good deal of the reading research is in favor of teaching metacognitive, inferential reading strategies to students in intermediate and high levels of EFL, due to their importance in meaning construction. Such an approach is based on the assumption that students have already learned the basic, literal, and text-attack reading strategies in their beginners' levels.

Though my participants had been studying English for eleven years now, they still find difficulties applying even effective lower level, literal strategies such as scanning, sequencing, and summarizing. They seemed to be unaware of text attack strategies such as identifying patterns of organization or using reference words. This was clear in the pretest results which show that a large percentage of the participants failed to answer questions reflecting literal and text attack strategies. These low performances suggest that the participants should not be exposed to higher doses of inferential reading strategies when they are still struggling with the lower level, easy-to-apply ones. Some of the participants have problems even with decoding, using reference words, and scanning. Since learning reading strategies is a cumulative process where the readers learn the lower level ones, master them, and then move to higher level ones, it was necessary to tailor a reading course (the treatment) that is not too metacognitive in nature, giving more room to lower level, high-frequency key reading strategies such as those mentioned above, and in this way meeting the needs of both good and poor readers. In this way, I could help the participants build a strong foundation in lower level strategies, which would serve as a scaffold for inferential ones. Putting these theoretical perspectives and the reading strategies into practice, the explicit paradigm was adopted because it is more effective and promising in order to answer the research questions raised in this study, namely— (1) can teaching reading strategically help learners in the UAE become more fluent readers and enhance their growth in reading?, (2) will the mastery of high-frequency reading strategies maximize their chances of excelling at university admission sub-components reading tests?, (3) can these learners become autonomous readers?

### The Participating Students

The participants involved in this study were a class of 23 grade-11 science students pursuing their studies in a UAE government boy's school where the medium of instruction is Arabic and where English is taught as a foreign language. Their ages ranged from 15 to 17. Though the students in this class had different nationalities (about 50% Emirati, 30% Sudanese, and 20% other Arab nationalities), they had similar educational backgrounds, having all been educated in Emirati government schools. These students had been taught English for ten years, five hours a week, nine months a year using *English for the UAE*, an English curriculum consisting of a series of pupil's and workbooks from grade 1 through grade 12.

### Procedures and Data Collection

The research involved an experimental study that consisted of three main parts: a pre-treatment test, treatment (a strategic reading course), and a post-treatment test. Data were collected over a three-month semester and can be described as follows: (1) pre-treatment, (2) treatment, the strategic reading course, and (4) post-treatment data.

### Pre-treatment Instruments

Pre-treatment data were collected through three instruments: (a) an examination of the participating students' pupil's book reading materials, (b) a pretest, and (c) an evaluative questionnaire.

#### Participants' reading materials

The pupils' book reading material examination aimed to assess the comprehension questions used by the grade 11 book designers to check students' understanding and see whether these questions are consistent with the effective lower and higher level reading strategies or. It's axiomatic that effective comprehension questions are consistent with reading strategies such as skimming for main idea, scanning for details, guessing word meanings from context, inferencing, and using discourse makers (Brown, 2004).

Also, this examination aimed to find out about the book designers' approach to teaching reading comprehension, i.e., whether they provide tips on how to find the main idea of the target text, how to make reasonable inferences, how to summarize, how to use anticipation skills and strategies, etc. An expository reading and a short

story were selected as samples from the pupils’ reading materials along with the comprehension questions accompanying them. The questions were classified as calling for lower level or higher level reading strategies consistent with effective reading strategies discussed in the literature on reading.

Pretest (see Appendix B.1)

This test was comprised of three texts selected from practice tests that appeared in *TOEFL Success* (Rogers, 1996), *Focus on IELTS* (O’ Connell, 2002) and CEPA (Napo, 2006). The rationale behind selecting passages from these tests is that the participants will be required to take these standardized tests on entry to Emirati higher education institutes after their 12<sup>th</sup> grade. The 31-question test lasted 45 minutes. The types of questions and strategies they call for can be categorized as shown in Table 4 below.

Table 4. Pretest Comprehension Questions and the Strategies Consistent with Them

Percentage of type of questions and the strategy called for	Examples of the test questions
Skimming questions (10%)	The main idea of this text is... The author’s main purpose in ...
Scanning, who, where, what questions (29%)	Until the mid 1800s ice cream was usually made in...(places as choices)
Guessing word meanings (13%)	The word “abruptly” in line 7 is closest in meaning to...
Inferring questions (16%)	It can be inferred from the passage that two thirds of the film <i>Modern Times</i> is...
Reference questions (6%)	The word “this” in line 16 refers to which of the following?
Cause/effect questions (3%)	The Roman emperor Nero kept snow in his palace to...
Detail questions (negative, all-but-one, information transfer questions) (23%)	According to the passage, Chaplin got the idea for the film from...

### Evaluative questionnaire

After discussing the results with the participating students, they were invited to express their opinions about the test's possible areas of difficulty by completing an evaluative questionnaire (see Appendix A.2). This structured data-gathering instrument consisted of eight statements on which the participating students needed to say whether they agreed or disagreed. These statements were followed by four open-ended questions to help students express themselves more freely.

### Treatment Instruments

The treatment was a strategic reading course aimed to reinforce the participants' already known reading strategies and teach them new ones. It was composed of eight high-frequency, effective reading strategies. Qualitative data were obtained from three sources. (1) To assess the participants' comprehension of these strategies, i.e., detect any unforeseen practical problems in understanding and applying the strategy in-focus, the participants were required to complete a feedback report (see Appendix B.4) immediately after each studied strategic reading lesson. (2) Qualitative data were also collected through keeping a log where I recorded some field notes and thoughts coming from observing the participants while working. (3) In addition, data were gathered through students' running reading logs (see Appendix B.5).

### The Strategic Reading Course (Treatment)

Prior to designing the reading strategies course and engaging the participants in it, I considered the results drawn from the pre-treatment reading test, the questionnaire, and the pupil's book examination. Based on initial results which showed that the participants experienced problems with lower level as well as higher level reading strategies, were bottom-up oriented, and had not been sufficiently exposed to varied reading strategies, I tailored a three-month reading course (the treatment).

As part of the treatment and prior to starting the reading strategies work, I devoted one class, as a warm up for the whole reading course, to examine the participants' views and conceptions of reading, and to encourage them to reflect on what fluent readers usually do when reading. To this end, I wrote on the board, "What do you think good readers do when reading?" and invited students to think of themselves when reading English or Arabic materials and ponder the question and, in

English or Arabic, jot down on a piece of paper five good characteristics of proficient readers. During a class discussion of the question, I wrote some of their answers on the board and explained that there were many avenues that could be followed to become good readers. Some of these routes are reading English books, building a good solid vocabulary base, and using effective reading strategies.

The strategic reading course was designed to acquaint the participants with new comprehension strategies and to help them consolidate the ones they knew. I taught these strategies implicitly and explicitly and used both reading passages from the participants' pupil's book, relevant external articles, and short stories (Beer & Anderson, 2003; Richards & Eckstut, 2003). Each time I exposed the participants to a new strategy, I used handouts inspired from the reading course books discussed in chapter two and the participants' pupil's book (see Appendix B.1, B.2, and B.3). The focal reading strategies I taught were (1) skimming, (2) scanning, (3) using reference words, (4) finding the pattern of organization, (5) guessing word meanings, (6) summarizing, (7) making predictions, (8) and inferring. Other peripheral focal-relevant strategies were also touched on. Each strategy in-focus was introduced through two to three discussion questions on which the participants were invited to reflect. The class discussion of these questions paved the way for defining the studied strategy. After this preliminary exposure, the participants were asked to work in pairs and complete a couple of unfinished sentences about the strategy in-focus with "when," "why," and "how" to gain metacognitive knowledge (Appendix B.1). Also, in each of the taught strategies, I presented the participants with an illustrative example showing how the strategy could be used. As a sequel to this, I invited them to apply the strategy in-focus, but prior to this I modeled it in front of them to help them augment their understanding. After trying their hands at the newly studied strategy, I assigned relevant homework to reinforce what had been learnt which gave me a chance to assess their understanding. After each strategy lesson, students completed a feedback report in which they answered yes/no and open-ended questions related to the usefulness, areas of difficulty, and the main things about the strategy in focus (see Appendix B.4).

### Skimming

I devoted four sessions over a period of two weeks to skimming because it involves reading for general ideas, topics, and writers' purposes. After distributing

handouts featuring the materials and the steps of the lesson (Appendix B. 1), we started discussing skimming. We defined this strategy as a process of quick coverage of reading matter to determine its general or main idea. It is a prediction strategy used to give a reader a sense of the topic and purpose of a text, the organization of the text, and the writer's point of view. Later as an illustrative example, students read a newspaper article with the main ideas underlined and guessed its general idea. To apply the newly acquired strategy, I asked the participants to skim a text on agriculture in their pupil's book and answer two skimming multiple-choice questions. This skimming class was followed by two other relevant lessons dealing with skimming texts and paragraphs for topics. The same procedures as the ones followed in teaching skimming for general ideas were adopted in these two lessons.

### Scanning

Being a low level reading strategy which can be learnt easily by the participants, two sessions were assigned for this strategy. It was defined as glancing rapidly through a text either to search for a specific piece of information (e.g. a name, a date) or to get an initial impression of whether the text is suitable for a given purpose. After gaining some metacognitive knowledge about scanning through completing a couple of unfinished sentences (Appendix B. 2), the participants scanned a news story quickly and answered four scanning questions. They skimmed the text for gist, then looked at the key words in the questions and scanned the text for the correct answers. For the application of this strategy, the participants read a short story in their pupil's book, answered two multiple-choice skimming questions, and then answered scanning questions about it. In the second scanning class, students solved two reading passages accompanied by scanning questions. This strategy was followed by a text-attack strategy—using reference words.

### Using Reference Words

Two sessions were devoted for this strategy over one week. After the usual routine involved in introducing each strategy, the participants came to know that using reference words in text interpretation and meaning construction, means paying attention to the referential cohesive chain that holds different segments of a text together. From the beginning, I tried to discuss with the participants how understanding the cohesion of a text or a paragraph enhances comprehension. After going through two illustrative examples, students understood that the noun replaced

by the pronoun is usually called the referent, and were asked to do an exercise in which they were asked to read six sentences in which the pronouns were underlined and circle the referents referring to these words. After finishing this exercise, the participants had to read a ten-line passage and focus on underlined pronouns. They were asked to write the pronouns in a column below the passage, and give their corresponding referents in front of them. After completing this exercise, the participants went through another exercise where they had to read a fourteen-line passage, underline its seventeen pronouns, write them in a column below the passage, and write their corresponding referents in front of them.

#### Finding the Pattern of Organization

Considering its importance, this strategy was taught over two weeks and took four sessions. The preliminary usual routine involved with introducing the strategy helped elicit the four main patterns of organization: listing, time order, cause-effect, and comparison. These patterns were taught during one class time each.

Listing: The participants skimmed a short paragraph where they were acquainted with signal words like “several,” “first,” and “second” and came to know that these words are used to enumerate or list reasons and facts.

Time order: To consolidate what students knew about this pattern, the participants read a paragraph about Albert Einstein, skimmed it for the topic and main ideas, and focused on the underlined signals and related them to events in the life of this scientist. A similar exercise was given for further practice.

Cause-effect: The participants read ten sentences, circled the cause/effect signal words, and underlined the cause and the effect in each sentence. Following this, they read a paragraph about Florida and completed Table 5.

Table 5. Cause/effect Signal Words

<b>cause</b>	<b>signals</b>	<b>effects</b>
cold weather	causes can cause	problems orange trees to die

Comparison: After going through illustrative examples, the participants compared the UAE and Egypt and discussed how they are alike or different. When we corrected this exercise, I found that the participants used other expressions together with those found in the studied examples, so we came up with the following table.

Table 6. Comparison/contrast Signal Words

<b>words to show likeness</b>	<b>Words to show difference</b>
Alike, similar, same, also, like, both	different, unlike, more than, less than, but, however

After this activity, students were asked to read other short paragraphs comparing things and say how the compared items were alike or different. Following this exercise, we discussed how by identifying things that are alike or different, we can notice details, make predictions, and better understand what we read.

#### Guessing Word Meanings

This strategy took four classes over a period of two weeks. The aim of teaching students this strategy was to show the students how we can understand a text even if there are some tricky words. The data gathered from the questionnaire following the pretest showed that the participants attributed their failure to get good marks to the presence of too many difficult words. Also, often, in reading classes, some of the participants expressed reluctance to read even interesting texts, mainly because they were stuck whenever faced with tricky words. As an illustrative example, the participants were presented with a text, some information of which was missing, and were invited to read it and answer gist questions (Appendix B.3). After a while, they, in spite of the missing information, managed to answer the questions correctly, and in this way I showed them that in some instances we can still read and understand a text even with missing or tricky information. However, as skipping is not always rewarding, I encouraged them to guess the meanings of the tricky words. After the routine involved with introducing and defining each strategy, I exposed the participants to three ways of inferring word meanings: (1) focus on punctuation marks and words like, “for example” and “such as,” (2) focus on synonyms and antonyms, and (3) focus on context. Two short reading passages (Rogers, 1996) with multiple choice guessing words through context questions were used to practice this strategy.

#### Summarizing

This strategy was taught over one week. As paraphrasing is important for summarizing, the first class was devoted to paraphrasing. We discussed the importance of this strategy in enriching the participants’ language, remembering what they read, and checking their understanding. As an illustrative example, they read a

short paragraph followed by two paraphrases, chose the appropriate one, and accounted for their choice. A similar example was given for application. The next class was devoted to summarizing. After the usual routine involved with introducing each strategy, the participants read a short article followed by two summaries, and selected the best option and explained their choices. When they finished doing this exercise, we agreed that a summary should be comprehensive and faithful to the original text. To apply this strategy, students read a text, answered comprehension questions on it, and summed it up. For further practice, I exposed the participants to an exercise from an IELTS practice book where they saw how summarizing is assessed in IELTS tests.

**Making Predictions (Thinking About What Will Happen Next)**

Like summarizing, making predictions took two classes and was taught over one week. After defining it, the participants read a three-page story entitled *La Bamba* (Beers & Anderson, 2003) and were asked to make predictions based on the title and the words surrounding it (see Figure 3) and complete Table 7.

Figure 3. First Page in *La Bamba* Story

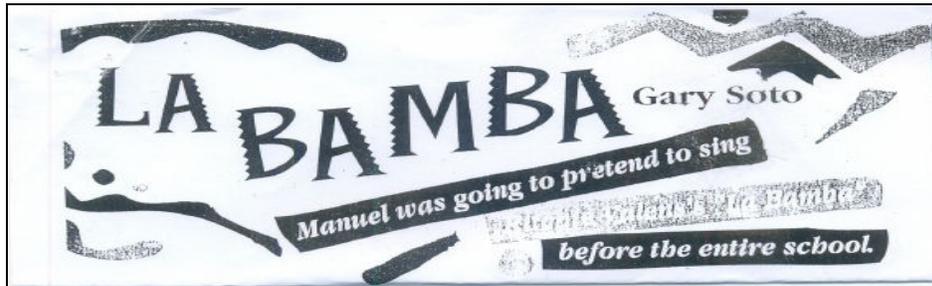


Table 7. Predictions about *La Bamba* Story Topic

Before you read	√ / X	After you read

**Making inferences**

Because of its importance and complexity, this strategy was taught over two weeks and took four classes. I started this lesson by presenting the participants with a cartoon (see Figure 4) to teach them how to make inferences.

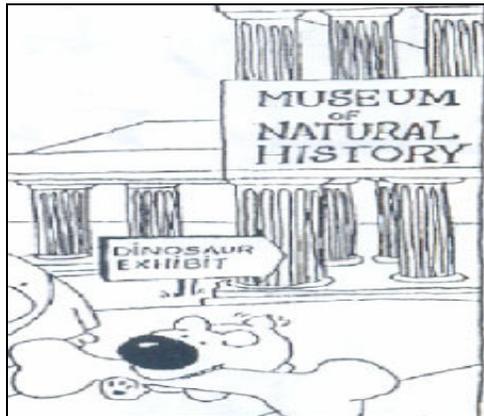
The participants made inferences based on their prior knowledge and evidence from the cartoon, and completed Table 9.

Table 8. How to make inferences

Prior Knowledge	+	Evidence from the Text	=	My Inference

(Printed from Beers & Anderson, (2003, p. 125)

Figure 4. A Picture for Inferring



(Adapted from Beers & Anderson, (2003, p. 125)

As prior knowledge is of big importance for inferring in particular and reading in general, I devoted the remainder of the class to prior knowledge use and activation. So, I gave them an article entitled “Do People Like Their First Names (Appendix B.6), and I modelled prior knowledge activation for them. While modeling, I related what I knew (prior knowledge) with the target text and the participants paid attention to me trying to understand what was going on. When I reached this sentence in the article, “People would mispronounce it or make fun of it,” I stopped reading and started verbalizing my thoughts. I said, “This reminds me of a friend of mine when I was in the primary school. His name was strange and we used to make fun of him. Also, this is reminiscent of the first days of every school year when teachers mispronounce strange names while taking attendance and getting acquainted with new students.” After that, we discussed the importance of relating what we have in our hearts (feelings from experiences) or heads (information from books, films, school) with the writer’s target text. I explained to them that linking the known (prior

knowledge) with the unknown (new information) helps us better understand the target print and interact with the writer, and helps us make predictions and inferences. That was followed by students' modeling. During the next class we went back to making inferences.

In this class, they read a short biography of a filmmaker and answered comprehension questions consistent with some of the reading strategies they had already studied. Then, they went through seven statements and tried to infer and tick the ones they thought the filmmaker would say. Later, I exposed them to the different ways in which inference questions are phrased in TOEFL tests (Appendix B.7).

That was the last reading strategy the participants were exposed to. As general practice and preparation for the post-test, I gave students a mini reading practice test the texts of which were selected from TOEFL practice tests. It was a good opportunity for the participants to practice and test most of the reading strategies they studied in class.

Apart from completing the unfinished class work as homework, the participants were invited to read a couple of stories and complete the following running reading log.

Table 9. Running Reading Log

Title	Number of Pages	Evaluation of What was Read	Strategies Used	Page Verification
.....	.....	.....	.....	.....

The aim of this activity was to help students reinforce the strategies studied in class through applying them to different stories. The stories the participants were given, were of different topics and varied levels of difficulty (low intermediate through high intermediate), giving the chance to the low as well high achievers to read. Each time a student read a story he was to write its title, indicate the number of lines/pages he read, assess what he read, indicate the strategies used, and indicate the number of the pages where he applied them for verification.

#### Post-treatment Instruments

These instruments were similar to those discussed above and, notably the pretest and the evaluative questionnaire. The test, which was comprised of three texts

similar to the pretest in the degree of difficulty, length, sources, and the required reading strategies, aimed to track the participants' progress in using the studied reading strategies and in comprehension in general. The types of questions used can be categorized as shown in Table 10. The percentages of the type of questions and the strategies they call for are different from those of the pretest because the posttest texts are different from those of the pretest.

Table 10. Posttest Comprehension Questions and the Strategies Consistent with Them

Percentage of type of questions and the strategy called for	Examples of the test questions
Skimming questions (6%)	The main idea of this text is... The passage mainly discusses...
Scanning, who, where, what questions (23%)	When she published her first book, Garson was closest to the age of...
Guessing word meanings (64%)	The word "reckless" in line 11 is closest in meaning to...
Inference / yes, no, Does not say questions (29%)	From the text, we can guess that...
Reference questions (6%)	The word "her work" in line 15 refers to which of the following?
Cause/effect questions (6%)	Before Hillary and Norgay, climbers were unsuccessful at climbing Mt. Everest because
Detail questions (negative, all-but-one, information transfer questions (23%)	Complete the flow chart with words taken from the reading passage.

As for the evaluative questionnaire, it had the objective of collecting the participants' attitudes towards reading areas of difficulties in order to compare them to the previous attitudes gathered from the evaluative questionnaire following the pretest.

## CHAPTER 4

### RESULTS, DATA ANALYSIS, AND FINDINGS

The participants' English reading material examination, pretest, feedback reports, posttest, and my journal provided me with a wealth of information. I will first present the major results, and then analyse them quantitatively and qualitatively, mainly, to see whether the development of the participants' comprehension strategies contributed to their growth in reading.

#### Results

##### Pupil's Book Analysis

The pupils' book reading material was examined to assess its comprehension questions and see whether they are consistent with the effective lower and higher level reading strategies. This analysis provided interesting results. I examined the comprehension questions following an expository text and a short story (Appendix A.1) and classified them as short-answer (nine) and yes/no (four) questions. (I found that all the pupil's book texts have only these two types of questions.) I discovered that these questions were problematic and ineffective for many reasons.

First, nine of the questions in both texts are display, easy-to answer, and do not make students think and develop effective reading habits. The pupil's book reading material developers use the same words as those of the target text in the questions. The participants, like many of their peers in other classes and levels, often deal with such a task by underlining certain words in the questions, locating them in the target text, and copying some of the words that precede and come after them. The lack of paraphrasing in question formation leads students in general not only to answer questions correctly without understanding what they read but also instills in them erroneous ways of dealing with comprehension questions. In fact, many students use this method in answering reading comprehension tests questions and pass their reading tests. To add to the problem, most of these nine questions are literal and display, thus making the participants read only the lines and not between or beyond them, and consequently inhibiting them from interacting with what they read and promoting active reading. Second, the lack of creativity and variation has to be considered one of the main flaws in these questions. All the pupil's book reading texts are accompanied by the same types of questions (short-answer and yes/no questions).

Such a focus makes the participants use and develop only certain surface, literal comprehension strategies, such as scanning, and one higher level strategy like inferring (even this is not well-developed since most guesses about yes/no questions are easy to make because of the way the questions are phrased). Therefore ignoring a wide array of other effective comprehension strategies such as skimming, summarizing, making predictions and guessing word meanings and text-attack strategies such as using patterns of organization and references. This best explains why most of the participants reported in their strategy feedback that they were unfamiliar with the strategies instructed in the treatment.

Also, a close look at the focus comprehension questions and others throughout the book reveals that the short-answer questions usually come before the yes/no questions. The problem here is that the first type of questions is usually more difficult to solve than the second type, thus engaging the participants in difficult tasks from the outset and not the opposite. More critically, no space is provided under the short-answer questions, and this means that students do not take notes of the answers to these questions. This does not help them comprehend and remember what they read. As for the yes/no questions, the participants are not asked for justification when they answer, which increases the likelihood that students are solving these questions by chance.

Finally, one more flaw that can be noticed about this approach to teaching reading comprehension is the fact that reading strategies are ignored and are not touched upon either implicitly or explicitly. The questions do not encourage students to use a wide array of reading strategies and there are no reading tips given to provide them with some insights into reading comprehension. The types of questions and the required reading strategies discussed here can by no means prepare our students for standardised tests indirect, higher level questions. So, we can infer that there is a gap between what is instructed and focused on in class and what is found in standardized tests.

#### The Pretest and the Evaluative Questionnaire Results

The pretest aimed to test the participants' comprehension abilities prior to the treatment through a reading test composed of three texts taken from TOEFL, IELTS, and CEPA practice tests (see Appendix A.2 and Appendix C.1). The scores obtained from this test (see Appendix A.3) show that the participants were very weak in

reading. All the participants failed to get marks above the average (15.5) in the pretest, save one who got 22 out of 31. These results are provided in Table 11 below.

Table. 11: The Participants' Scores on the Pretest

Students' scores out of 31	students (n=23)	Percentage
Between 1 and 9	13	57%
Between 10 and 15	9	39%
Between 16 and 22	1	4%
Above 22	0	0 %

The overwhelming majority of the students (96%) scored below average. 57% of them got grades below 10. Only one student scored above the average. After taking this test, students completed an evaluative questionnaire about the possible sources of difficulty that might have adversely affected their marks (see Appendix A.3). Table 12 summarizes the responses drawn from the participants' completed evaluative questionnaires. The options of strongly agree and agree are combined here. The same thing is done for strongly disagree and disagree.

Table 12. The Participants' Responses about the Pretest

Samples of the evaluative questionnaire questions	SA	A	N	SD	D
1. Texts are very long.	21%	40%	30%	0%	9%
2. Texts levels of difficulties are very high.	50%	20%	17%	4%	9%
3. Texts patterns of organization add difficulty to the test.	40%	18%	26%	4%	12%
4. I'm not familiar with the types of test questions.	65%	26%	9%	0%	0%
5. The language of some of the questions is very difficult.	73%	18%	9%	0%	0%
6. Time is not enough.	78%	18%	4%	0%	0%

The results presented in Table 12 show that 61% of the participants found the test texts long. 70% also agreed that the texts levels of difficulty were very high. In addition, these results reveal that 58% found that texts patterns of organization were a source of difficulty for them. Also 91% of the participants agreed that the language of some of the test questions was very difficult. The overwhelming majority (96%) agreed that they didn't have enough time (statement 6 above). Another important result presented in Table 12 is that the majority of the participants agreed that they were unfamiliar with the pretest types of questions. This suggests that they were unfamiliar with the reading strategies these questions call for such as skimming, making inferences, and text-attack strategies. This indicates that they were not being prepared for these types of texts. (see the reading questions accompanying the pretest three texts in Appendix A. 2).

#### The Treatment, Feedback Reports, and Journal Results

Field notes obtained from observing the participants during the treatment also revealed the participants' problems, reactions, and attitudes towards the treatment. On the first day, as part of the treatment and before starting the reading strategies work, during a warm up session for the treatment, the participants were asked "What do you think good readers do when reading?" in order to examine their views and conceptions of reading, and to encourage them to reflect on what fluent readers usually do when reading. Their answers included the following:

Good readers are those who:

- are good at decoding
- get the gist of the print through quick reading.
- guess the meaning of tricky words or use the dictionary.
- can answer questions related to what they read.
- understand the purpose of the writer.
- can summarize what they have read in a few lines.
- ask for help (teacher, classmates, or parents) in case they encounter difficulties when reading.
- are able to make predictions
- look up difficult words in the dictionary when reading

A class discussion based on students' comments which were written on the board helped them define and reflect on what successful readers do. In addition, such an

activity permitted me to correct some misconceptions shared by the participants about fluent readers. For example, I warned them against the overuse of the dictionary when reading because this might make reading dull and might kill in them the ability to guess words from context. Also, they came to know that decoding is not enough for reading, since understanding what we read is more important. Highlighting the good characteristics of good readers, may help students form a concrete picture of what they should do as fluent readers and make them wonder about how they could become good readers. Together with the treatment results, the feedback reports the participants completed after each strategic lesson (see Appendix B.4) reveal important data.

Examining the completed feedback reports yes/no questions about the eight taught reading strategies, most of the participants reported this was the first time they saw these strategies except for scanning and using reference words. The participants completed feedback reports about the eight strategies they studied in class. Table 13 provides the responses for the skimming, guessing word meaning, and using reference words strategies.

Table13: Yes Responses to Feedback Report Questions  
Concerning Three Strategies n=23

	Strategy in-focus name	Skimming	Guessing	Reference
	Questions	Yes	Yes	Yes
1	Have you seen it before?	17%	22%	70%
2	Have you understood it?	87	73%	100%
3	Do you find it useful?	100%	100%	100%
4	Is it difficult to apply?	40%	60%	10%
5	Do you think it can be used in other subjects?	67%	60%	70%

The results about the first question show that the majority of the participants weren't familiar with skimming and guessing reading strategies and had a good knowledge of using reference words. As for question two, the majority of the participants found skimming, using reference words, and guessing easy to understand. All the participants agreed on the usefulness of these comprehension strategies in meaning construction as responses to question three shows. However, only 10% of the participants found using reference words difficult to apply, 60% and 40% found guessing word meanings and skimming difficult to apply respectively.

In their answers to the open-ended questions, and particularly the “other comments” questions, most of the participants commented that they needed more time and further practice in skimming, guessing word meanings, using patterns of organization, making inferences, and summarising. For example, when answering the “other comments” question about skimming, some of the students said:

“I think we need more questions to know more about this strategy”

“What about giving [us] more exercises?”

And in answering the same question about guessing word meanings, some of the participants said:

“More classes”

“I think we must study more this strategy because it is a little hard”

“We need continual practice” (translated)

Results Gathered from the Posttest and the Evaluative Questionnaire

The posttest (see Appendix C.1) aimed to track the participants’ progress in reading in general and in their understanding of the focus reading strategies in particular. The scores obtained in this test (see Appendix A. 3) are presented in Table 14.

Table. 14: The Participants’ Scores on the Posttest

Students’ scores out of 31	No. students (n=23)	Percentage
Between 1 and 9	1	4%
Between 10 and 15	13	56%
Between 16 and 22	9	39%
Above 22	0	0%

Table 14 shows that a little over half of the participants were near the average. 39% of the participants scored between 16 and 22. Only one participant obtained a score below 9.

The posttest evaluative questionnaire (see Appendix A.3) was aimed at eliciting areas of difficulties faced by participants. Table 15 highlights the chief findings drawn from the participants’ completed posttest evaluative questionnaire. I combined the two columns "Strongly Agree" and "Agree" together, and "Disagree" and "Strongly Disagree" together, because I told the participants that what counted for me was their agreement or disagreement.

Table 15. The Participants' Responses to Some of the Evaluative Questionnaire Statements about the Posttest.

Samples of the evaluative questionnaire questions	SA	A	N	SD	D
1. Texts are very long.	31%	30	9%	20%	10%
2. Texts levels of difficulty are very high.	21%	40%	18 %	13 %	8%
3. Texts patterns of organization add difficulty to the test.	10%	8%	30 %	12 %	40%
4. I am not familiar with the types of test questions.	0%	13%	30 %	57 %	0%
5. The language of some of the questions is very difficult.	9%	58%	9 %	18%	6%
6. Time is not enough.	70 %	12%	9 %	9 %	0%

Table 15 shows that 61% of the participants found the posttest's three texts very long and their levels of difficulty very high. Also, 52% of them disagreed that the texts patterns of organization added difficulty to the test. As for responses to question 4, only 13 % found the test types of questions unfamiliar to them, but 67% agreed that the language of some of the test questions was very difficult. While the participants had different opinions on the first four statements, the majority of them (82%) reported that they were short of time. The participants' familiarity with the posttest questions and the strategies they call for is due to the strategic reading course. This shows that by teaching students reading strategies, they became more effective readers who can tackle standardised tests texts.

#### Results Gathered from the Running Reading Log

In order to make the participants further practice and augment their understandings of the instructed reading strategies, I gave them short stories and asked

them to read the stories that appealed to them and complete the running reading log (see Appendix B.5.).

Table 16. Sample Results of all Running Reading Logs

Story title and number of students who reported on it	Number of pages read	Evaluation of what was read	Strategies used	Reported pages where the strategies were used
<i>The All-American Slurp</i> 15 students	All pages (4)	I like it	- Guessing word meanings - Using the dictionary - Skimming	The last two pages
<i>Journey Home</i> 5 students	pp. 8-11	Very interesting but too long	- Previewing - Scanning - Guessing	-All pages - Flannel (page, 10)
<i>The Adventures of Tom Sawyer</i> 15 students	20 pages	Interesting, full of suspense	- Previewing - Guessing - Summarizing	- sneak, p.10 - hesitation, p 8,11 - daring, p. 8 - chimney, p. 11

The participants started reading stories and completing Table 16 in the middle of the treatment, i.e., after students gained some knowledge about how reading strategies work. As they weren't used to reading stories, they found this activity a little bit difficult. Table 16 illustrates samples of the participants' actual information on some of the stories they read and shows that the participants used not only the strategies instructed in class, but also some of the strategies that appeared in Anderson's (1999) list of 24 reading strategies distributed to them previously, such as using the dictionary and asking a classmate or a parent. The knowledge the participants gained about the comprehension strategies and the reading models

consistent with them helped them read and understand short stories independently. So, By showing learners' how reading strategies work and how fluent readers read, we can make them autonomous readers.

### Discussion

Quantitative as well as qualitative analysis support the hypothesis that teaching reading strategies explicitly improves reading comprehension. The treatment enhanced the participants' growth in reading, improved their chances of doing well in university admission sub-components reading tests, and helped them become autonomous readers.

#### Better Readers

The main purpose of the study was to see whether learners in the UAE could become successful readers and enhance their growth in reading by teaching them reading strategically. Results from the treatment, feedback reports, posttest scores, and my journal supported the hypothesis that by instructing students effective reading strategies, they became better meaning makers. According to Tovani (2000), reading researchers suggest that successful readers are those who use their background knowledge, infer, control their comprehension, "use "fix-up" strategies when meaning breaks down" (p. 19), and ask questions about the text, before, during, and after reading. It is difficult to claim that the participants became fluent readers after a three-month strategic reading course, however, both qualitative and quantitative data suggest that most are on their way to proficiency in reading. The treatment helped them gain good knowledge about the high-frequency, key reading strategies that fluent readers usually use to tackle reading.

In answering the feedback report question about the taught reading strategies "Have you understood it?", 87% of the participants understood skimming, 73% gained knowledge about guessing word meanings, and 100% augmented their understanding of using reference words (see Table 13). But what sort of knowledge did the participants gain about the taught reading strategies? The activity on the "how," "why," and "when" of the taught reading strategies repeatedly practiced during the treatment (see Appendix B1, Appendix B2, and Appendix B3 for reading lessons handouts) helped the participants acquire metacognitive knowledge about the

taught reading strategies. Also, the other diverse activities found in these handouts helped the participants study and apply these strategies.

The responses the participants gave when answering the feedback report question number 7 “What do you think the most important things about this strategy are?” reveal that they gained confidence in using all the reading strategies. Answering this question about skimming some of the participants said:

“The strategy teaches me how to understand the whole idea of what I read”

“It gives me the main idea in short time”

“It can help you to understand all the text from the first lines”

“It improves your reading speed”

And in answering the same question about using the patterns of organization, they said:

“It helps me understand what I read”

“It helps me write a paragraph”

“Focus on the on the pattern the paragraph because it can help you understand the target text”

“Signal words are important in reading”

In answering the same question about guessing word meanings they said:

“It (the strategy) makes us understand new difficult words”

“It is useful for other subjects”

“It makes us think and search to understand”

“It improves my English language”

“Focus on clues”

“It helps me understand the text in a short time”

“It helps me learn new vocabulary”

They reported that they were able to make predictions which successful readers usually do when reading, and felt that using the strategy of making predictions before and while reading made reading “boring” short stories an exciting activity. Before most of the participants used to find reading short stories and long texts dull, but when asked to make predictions, which entails sometimes stopping reading in the middle of a story, summarizing what you have read, and guessing what will happen next, they found reading more exciting. When reading “La Bamba” story (see Figure 4) the participants practiced making predictions, and they found reading enjoyable.

More importantly, when studying making inferences, the participants were able to activate their background knowledge and acted like fluent readers. This is clearly illustrated in the their modeling of activating their prior knowledge while reading and how they tried to use their schemata when they read a story entitled “Do People Like Their First Names?” (Appendix B.6). After observing me model the activity of prior knowledge activation, they read the story, marked it with PK (for “Prior Knowledge”) whenever they found anything that could be related to their prior knowledge, and modeled the activity for the whole class. These are two examples of their modeling:

One student stopped at “got a lot of teasing from other children,” wrote PK next to it, and told us how this reminded him of a friend whose name was peculiar and used to be laughed at by his classmates. Another student stopped at “started calling her Dee and the nickname stuck” and marked it with PK. He said that was reminiscent of his own situation, as his name was a little bit long— Abd al Rahman—and told how his friends reduced his name to Abdu.

Also, this familiarity and understanding of reading strategies and the reading questions consistent with them is shown in Table 17. Before the treatment, 91% of the participants faced difficulties in answering the pretest questions because they weren’t familiar with the reading strategies they call for, but after the treatment, 57% of the participants found the posttest questions (similar to the pretest’s) and the reading strategies they reflect familiar.

Table 17. The Participants’ Responses to “I’m not familiar with the test types of questions" after Taking the Pretest and the Posttest

	Pretest	T R E A T M E N T	Posttest
Strongly agree/ Agree	91%		13%
Neutral	9%		30%
Strongly disagree/ Disagree	0%		57%

In short, the treatment partly enabled the participants to gain a great deal of knowledge about a good battery of reading strategies which fluent readers possess. Thanks to this strategic reading course, the participants were more aware of the

reading strategies, got insightful knowledge of how to use them, and approached reading passages using bottom-up and top down reading models. These results suggest that the participants were on their way to developing proficiency in reading. They support the hypothesis that by teaching UAE learners effective reading strategies, we can help them become more effective readers.

#### More Chances to Successfully Tackle Standardized Tests

The second purpose of this study was to see whether by teaching UAE learners reading strategies, we could maximize their chances of doing well in university admission sub-components reading tests. The data gathered from the pretest and posttest results show that the participants got better scores in the posttest and showed more skill in tackling standardized tests. This supports the hypothesis that we can help students boost their scores if taught reading strategies.

The results of the pretest (see Table 11) and those scored in the posttest (see Table 14) show that the participants made remarkable progress. While only one participant passed the pretest, nine managed to get grades above the average in the posttest. More significantly, only one participant got a grade below ten in the posttest compared with 13 in the pretest. Commenting on the causes of their failure to perform successfully on the pretest, the majority of the participants agreed that they were not familiar with the standardised tests types of indirect, thinking questions (see Table 12). This can be explained by the fact that the reading questions contained in the pupil's book are usually direct and do not help them develop the reading strategies good readers usually have. So, we can infer that there is a gap between what the participants do in class and what is required from them in standardised tests like TOEFL and IELTS and UAE admission tests like the CEPA. The treatment bridged this gap by familiarising the participants with the strategies good readers have and what passing standardised tests require. The progress the participants made in the posttest shows that by developing the students' reading strategies, we can enhance their growth in reading and maximize their chances in doing well in reading in standardised tests.

To track the participants' understanding and use of the reading and text-attack strategies consistent with the pretest and posttest questions and show the participants' progress in using comprehension strategies, I grouped the pretest and posttest questions (see Appendices A.3 and C.1) under corresponding strategy categories.

Some of the questions were consistent with four reading strategies—skimming, scanning, guessing words through context, and inferring— and other questions called for two text-attack strategies—using reference words and determining cause and effect. Some detail and sentence transformation questions were hard to categorize because in answering them the participants needed to use more than one strategy. To quantify the reading strategies, I calculated the percentages of the right answers to the questions going with these strategies as presented in the two bar graphs shown in Figure 5 for the four reading strategies, and Figure 6 for the two text-attack strategies.

Figure 5. The percentages of the Right Answers to the Questions going with Comprehension Strategies

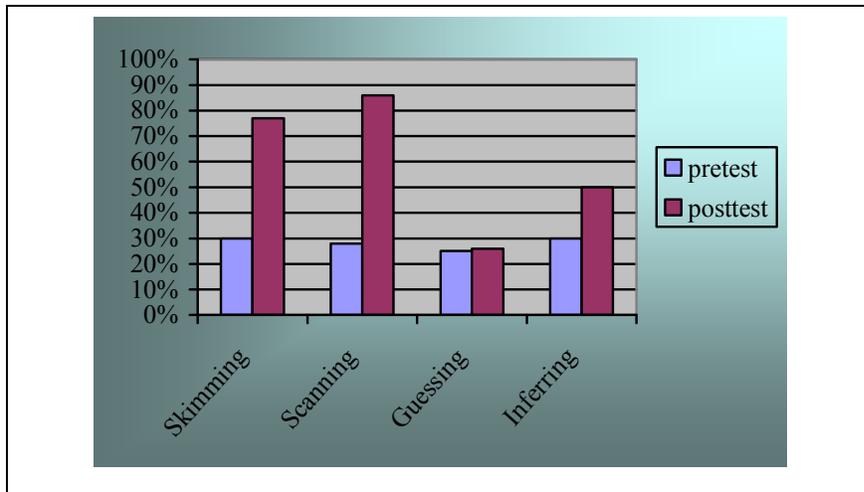
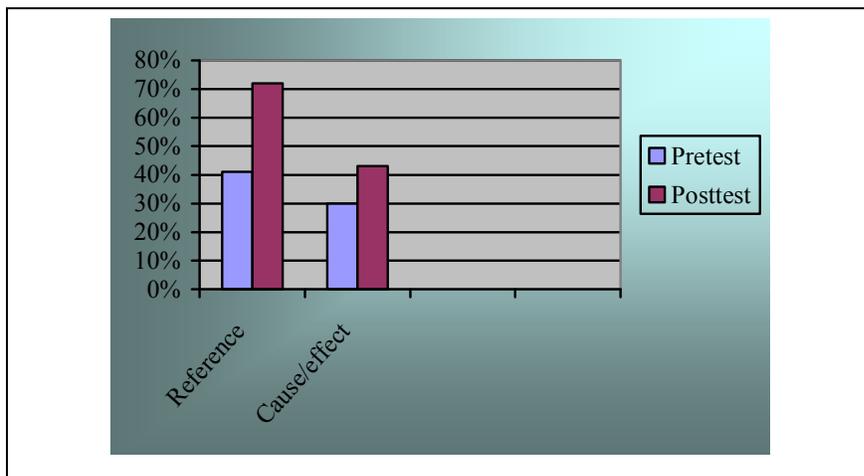


Figure 6. The Percentages of the Right Answers to the Questions Going with Text-attack Strategies



These figures show remarkable progress in comprehension and in using the high-frequency reading strategies they studied and that were reinforced in the strategic reading course (treatment). Also, what is noticeable is that a significant change is more apparent in lower level strategies (scanning and skimming) than the higher level ones (guessing, making inferences, determining cause and effect), which suggests that surface strategies may be easier to teach than metacognitive ones. The greatest increase is noticed in scanning, rising from 28% in the pretest to 86% in the posttest, whereas the lowest increase is found in guessing word meanings, which increased by only 1%. This slight rise may be due to the insufficient practice this strategy received. All the eight instructed strategies received much practice when they were first introduced and later during other regular English classes through the pupil's book reading passages, except for the strategy of guessing word meanings. This may be explained by the fact that most of the readings in the pupil's book are non-authentic. When I introduced, for instance, the way of guessing word meanings with the help of punctuation marks, I could not find any text in the pupil's book where punctuation marks were used to explain difficult words.

#### Performance on the Three Standardised Tests

Overall, the participants made good progress in the posttest. However, this progress was more noticeable at the level of the TOEFL and CEPA posttest subcomponents compared with the IELTS as presented in Table 18.

Table 18. The Participants' TOEFL, CEPA, and IELTS Pretest and Posttest Scores

	Pretest				Posttest		
	TOEFL (8)	CEPA (8)	IELTS (15)		TOEFL (11)	CEPA (8)	IELTS (12)
Number of questions							
Below the average	16 (70 %)	18 (78 %)	22 (96%)		9 (39 %)	0 (0 %)	17 (74 %)
Average	5 (21 %)	3 (13 %)	0 (0 %)		5 (21 %)	1 (4 %)	4 (18%)
Above the average	2 (9%)	2 (9 %)	1 (4 %)		8 (35 %)	22 (96%)	2 (9 %)

The significant progress made in the TOEFL and CEPA posttest subcomponents shows that the treatment was more efficient at the CEPA and TOEFL types of tests than that of the IELTS. Table 18 shows that prior to the treatment, 78% of the participants got grades below the average in the pretest CEPA text; however, no participant got a grade below the average in the same text type in the posttest after the treatment. A lesser but significant progress in solving TOEFL texts is also apparent in the above table. This significant progress isn't witnessed when we compare the IELTS pretest and posttest scores. While 22 of the participants got grades below average in the pretest IELTS text, still 17 participants scored grades below the average in the same type of text in the posttest.

Classifying the question types and putting them under their corresponding reading and text-attack strategies, the CEPA and TOEFL types of questions were similar and easier to classify because each one calls for the application of one reading strategy. For example, the first question in any TOEFL or CEPA test is a skimming question. However, examining IELTS questions, I discovered that they are detail questions and hard to categorize because they involve more than one strategy and require the reader to use many comprehension strategies at the same time. This may explain why it was difficult for the participants to do, since they were novice users of these strategies. Information transformation transfer questions, for instance, require scanning, inferring, paraphrasing, and understanding the nature of the missing word(s).

Results presented in Table 18 discussed above, reveal that the participants managed to master comprehension strategies and successfully solve questions that are consistent with one reading strategy and not those that call on the participants to apply more than one strategy at the same time. Maybe with further practice over a longer period, the participants will be able to augment their understanding of more reading strategies and be able to successfully deal with comprehension questions that require several strategies. But what is clear is that the knowledge the participants got from the strategic reading course contributed to their improvement in comprehension and may improve their chances of doing well in standardised tests' reading components and in dealing with their future academic readings.

## Developing Confident and Autonomous Readers

Another purpose of this study was to determine whether UAE learners could become autonomous learners if taught how reading strategies work and how fluent readers read. The participants' feedback reports comments on understanding and applications of the newly studied reading and text-attack strategies to reading materials from TOEFL and other interesting reading course books like *Elements of Literature* (Beers and Anderson, 2003) show a new degree of confidence. Participants' ability to tackle and comprehend authentic texts like those found in standardised tests seems to have generated a feeling of confidence. This is also supported by participants' running reading logs which they had independently completed based on their home readings (see Table 16). Though the participants were reluctant to read in the beginning (only ten students handed me their reading running logs in the first time) because they were not used to reading English stories on their own, they, equipped with the knowledge they acquired from the treatment, managed to read some stories and handed me reading logs. This, to some extent, supports the hypothesis, i.e., by teaching students reading strategies we can contribute to the enhancement of their reading strategies and their autonomy in reading. The reading running log (Table 16) I compiled from the participants' logs indicates that the participants were no longer those novice readers who still needed guidance from their teacher on how to use reading strategies skilfully.

In short, the present study findings show that teaching UAE learners reading strategies is rewarding. The theoretical and practical knowledge the participants gained about the treatment strategies helped them become more effective and autonomous meaning makers and improved their abilities to tackle standardised tests readings.

## CHAPTER 5

### CONCLUSION, IMPLICATIONS, AND LIMITATIONS

#### Summary

This study was carried out to determine whether by developing UAE learners' reading and text-attack strategies, we can help them become better strategic readers, maximize their chances of doing well at university admission sub-components reading tests and academic reading, and help them become autonomous successful readers. The findings discussed in the in Chapter 4 support the study's hypothesis and show that most of the participants gained a great deal of knowledge of the taught reading strategies theoretically and practically, bettered their scores in the posttest and were familiarized with standardized types of tests questions. Also, thanks to the strategic reading course, the participants gained some confidence in tackling texts and short stories independently, thus encouraging certain autonomy in reading and learning.

What may add to the significance of this study is the fact that the obtained findings are in agreement with the reading strategies research literature. Just like the research suggests concerning the efficiency of teaching reading strategies (e.g. , Dowhower, 1999; Oxford, 1990; Palincsar & Brown, 1984) this study shows that the instruction of comprehension and text-attack strategies could contribute to the participants' growth in reading comprehension in general.

In harmony with what was claimed about the effectiveness of showing learners how fluent readers construct meaning and the possibility of passing on these habits to novice readers, the participating students in this study showed evidence of acquiring and skilfully applying good reading habits and being strategic when tackling the print in and outside class (see Table 16). This leads to another point where the present study and the literature on reading meet—autonomy. Dowhower (1999) and Anthony, Pearson, and Raphael (1993) affirm that comprehension strategies allow readers to be autonomous and in control of the comprehension process; consistent with this, the running reading log presented in Table 16, shows how the participants read short stories at home and tried out some of the studied strategies. Besides, interestingly enough, consistent with what is argued by Anthony et al. (1993) regarding the worthiness of the Explicit Instruction Model in teaching reading strategies, the participants found this model extremely helpful in understanding and successfully applying the comprehension strategies studied. Also, in line with Brown (2004) and

Rogers (1996), learners can become fluent readers and can maximize their chances in passing standardized exams if they are trained on well-constructed tests and familiarized with the types of questions these examinations usually have.

So, overall, just like what is discussed in the reading literature, the study results came to support the value of comprehension strategies, not only in reading but also in test taking.

Findings from this study fill a gap in the reading strategies field. While collecting reading literature for this study, I found that reading research aiming to elucidate the reading problems surrounding UAE EFL learners to be scarce. This scarcity has adversely affected the teaching of one of the main language skills—reading. In this context, this study will empower reading teachers, with comparable situations in the UAE and the Gulf, with illuminating insights on how to enhance their students' reading growth.

#### Implications

The experience and the wealth of information I gained from the endeavor to develop the participants' reading strategies and to help them become proficient meaning makers, place me in a good position to suggest some recommendations to teachers, material developers, and supervisors.

#### Implications for Teachers

Teachers have a dual responsibility, one to themselves and another to their learners. Teachers need to be theoretically and practically well-versed in reading and text-attack strategies, and this entails attending relevant workshops, observing experienced colleagues in their reading classes, and reading about and researching comprehension strategies. Once this knowledge is acquired, teachers should instruct and demonstrate what they know about reading in front of their learners (the novice readers) and thus pass on their expertise to them (Anthony et al., 1993). Also, teachers should help their students become independent learners. They have to make their learners aware of the fact that teachers are no longer those fountains of knowledge without which they can't survive academically. In this context, teachers must help their student be independent learners by asking them to pay attention to them while modeling, to be inquisitive, practice reading, and strive to develop their reading strategies to become autonomous readers and in control of their reading processes.

However, as we cannot guarantee such dedication on the part of teachers to be strategic readers and creative instructors simply because this approach to teaching reading comprehension is relatively new and not in vogue, we need support from material developers and supervisors.

#### Implications for Material Developers and Supervisors

The participants and I enjoyed the reading journey we embarked on during three months. Personally, I enjoyed being a strategic teacher, and the participating students enjoyed being active readers and critical thinkers (see Treatment section). Such a journey was enjoyable partly thanks to the great reading materials and creative ideas I adapted and used from reading course books such as those discussed in the literature review section. Hopefully, book designers responsible for developing and updating the UAE English series *English for the UAE* will consider incorporating authentic reading materials followed by comprehension questions consistent with effective comprehension strategies to help instructors teach reading strategically and learners become fluent readers. Such hope can be best transmitted to these book developers by supervisors as they are in the position to help update our textbooks.

In reality, just like teachers, UAE supervisors need to be well-versed in reading strategies to raise their awareness about the importance of these strategies in meaning construction and to be able to give significant, strategic feedback to the teachers they supervise. More importantly, supervisors need to organize strategic reading workshops for teachers, and encourage them to conduct action research, and reflect on their students' reading strategies. Supervisors should be aware not only of the latest trends in teaching reading strategies explicitly, but also in all the other language skills. At a time when the language literature supports the teaching of reading and other language skills and rules explicitly, and at a time when many course books are adopting this approach in developing EFL learners' English language, we are still lagging behind relying on implicit approaches to language teaching. Instead of exposing our learners to easy examples where the rules of language are applied, then showing them how to use these rules (modeling), and then asking them to apply what they have learnt and coach them till the target rules are learnt, we tend to mechanically teach these rules implicitly hoping that the learners will pick them up.

### Limitations and Directions for Future Research

Like all studies, the present investigation suffers certain limitations. First, the generalizability of the results is limited due to the small scale of the study. The reading situation and problems these twenty-three participating students in this study had cannot in any way be the same as all the UAE learners. For this reason, we must be careful when generalizing these findings. Second, the three-month strategic reading strategies course is insufficient. Grabe and Stoller (2002) suggest that when it comes to the instruction of reading strategies, we should talk about developing instead of teaching them for the optimal results to take place. According to them, for a strategy to be internalized and converted into a skill, much practice over a longer period should occur. Three months of teaching the participants reading strategies is not enough to help convert these strategies into automatized skills. Another limitation is the fact that testing was done immediately after the treatment. It would be interesting to retest after a longer interval.

More critically, the treatment was repeatedly interrupted because the participants had to cover certain units in their actual English program. Besides, the pupil's book reading texts were not appropriate for practicing the newly taught strategies. Fourth, as the participants were my actual students, some may devalue the findings of this study on the basis that the students might have been biased in their reaction to and evaluation of the whole treatment because they sought to please me. Being aware of this fact, I asked the participants not to write their names on the feedback reports and the evaluative questionnaires giving them more room to express themselves freely. Fifth, the application of the newly studied strategies was adversely affected by the lack of transfer and practice outside the English class. The data gathered from the participants' feedback reports together with field notes on this issue show that they were not using most of these strategies in other disciplines, as neither their teachers nor their books helped them to do so. The participants' Arabic reading comprehension classes are mainly display questions that do not challenge them and encourage them to use higher level reading strategies.

Moreover, the ways the participants are assessed in most of the subjects do not encourage them to learn thinking strategies. In most of the disciplines, teachers are assessing their students' memorising skills instead of thinking skills. Reading skills,

like other skills, are developed and not born with us, and unless we encounter situations in which we use and train these skills we won't acquire them.

#### Recommendations for Future Research

It goes without saying that this study could have yielded better results had it surpassed the weaknesses discussed above. For future more reliable and better research, I recommend that teachers or reading researchers conduct such a study over a longer period. More time would mean further practice, especially on metacognitive strategies, more room to teach the participants how to articulate more than one strategy at the same time, and more work on IELTS types of reading tests (the one that puzzled the participants).

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Appendix A.1 The participants' pupil's book reading passages examined sample questions

(1) The reading passage questions:

**a. Answer the Following questions:**

1. Mention some characteristics of workaholics.
2. What do workaholics suffer from?
3. What do you understand by the word 'balance' in line one?
4. What advice would you give a workaholic?

**b. State whether the following statements are true or false:**

1. Many people have poor working habits.
2. Workaholics' working hours are more than enough to complete their tasks.
3. Overwork causes side-effects, such as stress and frequent headaches.
4. Overwork has negative effects on our social relations.

(2) The short story questions:

**a. Answer the following questions:**

1. Why didn't the three brothers help their father on his farm?
2. How did Abdulrahman die? What did he leave for his sons?
3. How did the three brothers live after the death of their father?
4. How did the brothers feel when they couldn't find the treasure?
5. What did they decide to do? What was the result of their decision?

Al Wahida Secondary

Name:

.....  
School

Class:

.....  
Duration: 45 minutes

Instructor: Fawzi Ali

Read the following texts and answer the questions accompanying them.

Text A (IELTS)

# Smashing Stereotypes

Questions 1- 15

In a study titled *Male and Female Drivers: How different are they?* Professor Frank McKenna of the University of Reading looked at the accident risk between men and women.

- 5 He found that men drive faster, commit more driving violations, and are more inclined to drink and drive. They look for thrills behind the wheel, while women seek independence. And, although anecdotal evidence might suggest otherwise,
- 10 women are not starting to drive as aggressively as men.

The question of whether, as drivers, women differ from men is important, because it could affect insurance premiums, which are closely

- 15 geared to accident statistics.

Despite the increase in women drivers, McKenna's researchers found no evidence that this is changing accident patterns. It seems that age is far more important than gender in the car. It is

- 20 the biggest single factor in accident patterns, and, while inexperienced new drivers of both sexes are more likely to be involved in accidents, the study found striking new evidence to confirm that young men drive less safely than any other group.



<p>25 The survey shows that men and women aged 17 to 20 are most likely to be involved in bend accidents – men almost twice as often – but the difference decreases as drivers mature.</p> <p>30 Nearly half of all accidents involving young men and one-third of those involving young women take place when it is dark. Again, there is a steady decrease in such accidents as drivers grow older, but gender differences remain significant until drivers reach the age of 155.</p> <p>35 Although there is little difference between men and women in the distance they keep from the car in front, there are differences across age groups. Young drivers show less regard for the danger of following more closely, and young men are likely to</p> <p>40 'close the gap' as an aggressive signal to the driver in front to speed up or get out of the way.</p> <p>Men consistently choose higher speeds than women of the same age and driving experience. "This could be because men seek a thrill when they</p> <p>45 drive," says McKenna. "Speed choice is one of the</p>	<p>most important causes of accidents. But breaking the speed limits is regarded by men as a minor offence."</p> <p>50 Contrary to public belief, young drivers, as a group, are more likely to avoid drinking alcohol if they are driving, while men in the 30 to 50 age group admitted to drinking the most alcohol before driving.</p> <p>55 Men are most likely to nod off, probably because they are willing to drive for longer periods without a break - driver fatigue is a significant factor in accidents.</p> <p>60 According to Andrew Howard, of the Automobile Association, "We have to combat the group that speeds for thrills. The key is how men are brought up to look at the car. It is this which needs to be addressed."</p>
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**Questions 1-3**

Answer the following questions. Write **NO MORE THAN THREE WORDS** for each answer. ....

1 What is women's motivation for driving? .....

2 Which group of drivers has grown in number in recent years? .....

3 What is the most significant factor in accident patterns? .....

**Question 4**

4 After what age do men and women drive equally safely at night? .....

**Questions 5-9**

**Classify the following statements (5-9) as applying to**

- A men in general
- B young men in particular
- C both young men and young women

*Example:* They are the most likely to have accidents while driving.      *Answer*

- B
- 5. *They* may follow another car closely to make the driver go faster.      .....
- 6. *They* are more likely to have accidents due to tiredness.      .....
- 7. *They* are the least likely to drink and drive      .....
- 8. Driving gives them a feeling of excitement.      .....
- 9. *They* are the most likely to have accidents *on* bends.      .....

**Questions 10-15**

Do the following statements agree with the information in the text? *Write*

- TRUE*      *if the statement agrees with the information given*
- FALSE*      *if the statement disagrees with the information given*
- DOES NOT SAY*      *if there is no information about this*

- 10. There is a common belief that women are becoming more aggressive drivers.      .....
- 11. The results of the study may influence the cost of motor insurance.      .....
- 12. Young women are most likely to have accidents when driving at night.      .....
- 13. Men do not consider it very serious to exceed the speed limit.      .....
- 14. Women are more prone to accidents at junctions than men.      .....
- 15. Andrew Howard thinks there is little that can be done to reduce accidents.      .....

**Text B (TOEFL)**

**Questions 16-23**

line Probably the most famous film commenting on twentieth-century technology is *Modern Times*, made in 1936. Charlie Chaplin was motivated to make the film by a reporter who, While interviewing him, happened to describe working conditions in industrial Detroit. Chaplin was told that healthy young farm boys were lured to the city to work on automotive  
5 assembly lines. Within four or five years, these young men's health was destroyed by the stress of work in the factories.

The film opens with a shot of a mass of sheep making their way down a crowded ramp. Abruptly the scene shifts to a scene of factory workers jostling one another on their way to a factory. However, the rather bitter note of criticism in the implied comparison is not  
10 sustained. It is replaced by a gentler note of satire. Chaplin prefers to entertain rather than lecture.

Scenes of factory interiors account for only about one third of the footage of *Modern Times*, but they contain some of the most pointed social commentary as well as the most comic situations. No one who has seen the film can ever forget Chaplin vainly trying to keep pace  
15 with the fast moving conveyor belt, almost losing his mind in the process. Another popular scene involves an automatic feeding machine brought to the assembly line so that workers need not interrupt their labor to eat. The feeding machine malfunctions, hurling food at Chaplin who is strapped into his position on the assembly line and cannot escape. This serves to illustrate people's utter helplessness in the face of machines that are meant to serve  
20 their basic needs.

Clearly, *Modern Times* has its faults, but it remains the best film treating technology within a social context. It does not offer a radical social message, but it does accurately reflect the sentiments of many who feel they are victims of an over-mechanized world.

<p>16. The author's main purpose in writing this passage is to</p> <p>(A) criticize the factory system of the 1930s</p> <p>(B) analyze an important film</p> <p>© explain Chaplin's style of acting</p> <p>(D) discuss how film reveals the benefits of technology</p> <p>17. According to the passage, Chaplin got the idea for the film <i>Modern Times</i> from</p> <p>(A) a newspaper article</p> <p>(B) a scene in a movie</p> <p>© a job he had once held</p> <p>(D) a conversation with a reporter</p> <p>18. The word "abruptly" in line 8 is closest in meaning to</p> <p>(A) suddenly</p> <p>(B) mysteriously</p> <p>© finally</p> <p>(D) predictably</p> <p>19. It can be inferred from the passage that two thirds of the film <i>Modern Times</i></p> <p>(A) is extremely unforgettable</p> <p>(B) takes place outside a factory</p> <p>© is more critical than the other third</p> <p>(D) entertains the audience more than the other third</p>	<p>20. Which of the following could best replace the phrase "losing his mind" in line 15?</p> <p>(A) getting fired</p> <p>(B) doing his job</p> <p>(C) going insane</p> <p>(D) falling behind</p> <p>21. The word "This" in line 16 refers to which of the following?</p> <p>(A) the machine</p> <p>(B) the food</p> <p>(C) the assembly line</p> <p>(D) the scene</p> <p>22. According to the passage, the purpose of the scene involving the feeding machine is to show people's</p> <p>(A) ingenuity</p> <p>(B) adaptability</p> <p>(C) helplessness</p> <p>(D) independence</p> <p>23. The word "utter" in line 18 is closest in meaning to which of the following?</p> <p>(A) notable</p> <p>(B) complete</p> <p>(C) regrettable</p> <p>(D) necessary</p>
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Text C (CEPA)

## QUESTIONS 24-31

1. According to legend, Marco Polo brought the recipe for ice cream with him from China. However, there is no written record of this. We do know that the Chinese taught Arab traders how to combine syrups and snow, to make an early version of ice cream called sherbet. These traders then showed the people of Venice and the Romans how to make this frozen dessert. In fact the Roman Emperor, Nero, was said to be quite fond of pureed fruit sweetened with honey, and he liked to mix it with snow. He loved this concoction so much that he had special rooms built under his palace which were designed to keep the snow cold. In the 1500s, the recipe for sorbet was introduced to the French by Catherine de Medici.

2. The invention of ice cream came later with the development of custard, a milky dessert, and in 1775 people discovered that freezing custard would create a delicious sweet. This discovery was shortly followed by the creation of a machine to make ice cream which made the process much easier.

3. In America, Thomas Jefferson *so* loved ice cream that he imitated Nero by having a special cold room built for storing snow and he is said to have created the first ice cream recipe in the United States. Another president, George Washington, was one of the first people in the US to buy an ice cream machine.

4. Nothing really changed in the world of ice cream for the next 100 years. It was still being made at home. In 1851, this was all changed by a creative man named Jacob Fussell when he opened the first ice cream factory).

5. Near the beginning of the 20th century, the ice cream soda was created. It was made by accident when a scoop of ice cream fell into a glass of flavored *Coca-Cola*. A short time later, another delicious dessert was invented. It was called the 'Sundae' and contained ice cream covered with syrup and whipped cream

6. Perhaps the most important ice cream discovery was made during the 1904 Louisiana Purchase Exposition in Saint Louis. At the exposition, Charles Menches had a successful business selling ice cream in bowls. However, he had so many customers that he soon ran out of bowls. Sad, but determined to still find a way to sell his ice cream, he asked his friend Ernest Hamwi, who was selling a wafer-like biscuit called 'zalabia', a Syrian sweet, to form a cone [Tom the wafers to hold his ice cream. The combination proved very popular and the ice cream cone was born!

24. The main idea for this text is

- a) Chinese contributions to the development of ice cream
- b) ice cream is a popular, delicious dessert
- c) ice cream can be made from various ingredients
- d) historical developments of ice cream

25. The main idea for paragraph 6 is \_\_\_\_\_

- a) ice cream at the 1904 Exposition
- b) how bowls were used in the ice cream industry
- c) the invention of the ice cream cone
- d) how Syrians contributed to the history of ice cream

26. The words 'This discovery' in paragraph 2 refer to
- a) ice cream machine
  - b) sherbet
  - c) sorbet
  - d) frozen custard
27. The word imitated in paragraph 3 probably means
- a) invented
  - b) discovered
  - c) developed
  - d) copied
28. Most people think that \_\_\_\_\_ first brought ice cream to the western world.
- a) Marco Polo
  - b) Thomas Jefferson
  - c) The Chinese
  - d) Catherine de Medici
29. The Roman Emperor Nero kept snow in his palace \_\_\_\_\_
- a) to decrease the temperature
  - b) to keep his food cold
  - c) so he could make a cold dessert
  - d) so fruit would stay fresh
30. Ice cream, as we know it today, was invented
- a) in 1775
  - b) at the same time as custard
  - c) near the beginning of the 20th century
  - d) by Thomas Jefferson
31. Until the mid 1800s, ice cream was usually made in \_\_\_\_\_
- a) factories
  - b) special cold rooms
  - c) St. Louis
  - d) People's houses

Appendix A. 3: The Evaluative questionnaire the participants took after the pretest and the Posttest

**Possible Sources of Difficulty in Reading Tests**

SA: strongly agree/ A: agree/ N: neutral/ SD: strongly disagree/ D: disagree

A. Have a look at your test copy and tick the answer that applies to you.

	SA	A	N	SD	D
1 Texts are very long.					
2 The texts levels of difficulty are very high.					
3 Texts' patterns of organizations add difficulty to the test.					
4 I'm not familiar with texts' topics.					
5 I'm not familiar with the test types of questions.					
6 Most of the questions are not straightforward.					
7 The language of some of the questions is difficult.					
8 Time was not enough.					

(Answer the following questions either in Arabic or English)

B. What are the other factors that have contributed to the test difficulty?

.....  
 .....

C. I could have done better in the test if I had.....

.....  
 .....

D. Give some of the numbers of the questions that puzzled you.

.....

E. Mention some of the words in the questions that are not understandable.

.....

**N.B. All the questionnaire is read and explained to the students in advance.**

Appendix. A. 4 The participants' grades on the pretest and posttest

	Pretest					Posttest			
	CEPA	TOEFL	IELTS	Total		CEPA	TOEFL	IELTS	Total
	... /8	... /8	... /15	... /31		... /8	... /11	... /12	... /31
St 1	3	4	4	11		7	7	1	15
2	3	4	4	11		5	3	5	13
3	2	6	4	12		6	5	6	17
4	3	3	6	12		6	7	4	17
5	3	3	4	10		6	2	6	14
6	4	2	1	7		4	7	4	15
7	4	3	4	11		6	4	7	17
8	0	2	3	5		8	7	4	19
9	4	3	4	11		8	7	6	21
10	1	4	1	6		5	3	0	8
11	2	2	1	5		5	3	5	13
12	1	4	6	11		8	5	4	16
13	2	3	3	8		7	5	1	13
14	6	1	5	12		8	3	4	15
15	2	3	2	7		6	4	3	13
16	0	2	6	8		7	4	4	15
17	1	2	2	5		7	4	5	16
18	3	3	2	8		8	2	4	13
19	3	0	4	7		6	5	0	11
20	1	3	5	9		7	10	6	23
21	1	4	4	9		7	6	2	15
22	2	2	3	7		5	5	4	14
23	7	6	9	22		7	8	7	22

Appendix B. 1 Skimming lesson handout

**Lesson # 1: Focus on Skimming as a Reading Strategy**

*Objectives:*

To familiarize students with the strategy of skimming for general ideas.

*Reading Materials:* Pupil's Book p. 71, Agriculture

**Pre-reading**

Discussion

**Discuss and answer the following question with your teacher.**

1. Is it necessary to know the general idea of a text before reading it in detail?
2. What may a quick reading of a text give you?
3. Do you know how to skim a text for general ideas?

**Definition:**

Skimming is a process of quick coverage of reading matter to determine its general or main idea. It's a prediction strategy used to give a reader a sense of the topic and purpose of a text, the organization of the text, and the writer's point of view. (Today the focus will be on skimming for the general or main idea.

**Place when, why, how in front of the following statements.**

1. .... to skim? I focus on the beginning or the end of a paragraph.
2. I skim .... when I want to answer questions about the main idea, general idea.
3. .... to skim? I skim in order to find out the general idea quickly.
4. This is.....to skim: (1) Don't read every word or every sentence. (2) read the first few sentences at your usual speed and ask yourself, "what is this about"?. (3) go to the next paragraph as soon as you can guess the general idea. (4) Read only a few words in each paragraph after that focus on the beginning of each paragraph. (5) Always work quickly and remember that details are not important.
5. ....to skim? The guessed general ideas are good for an in-class discussion or a more careful reading to follow
6. ....to skim? Previewing titles and subheadings, and examining the accompanied pictures (if found) will give me a good idea of what the article is about.

**Example 1**

Here is an example from a newspaper article. The most important words are underlined. Focus on them and guess the general ideas. You should finish reading the article in less than 60 seconds. Then answer the questions below.

**Sports in the German Democratic Republic**

(adapted from the World Press Review, October, 1984)

Many East Germans are already thinking about the year 2000. That is an Olympic year. The east Germans are very serious about the Olympic Games. They want to do well in 2000, so they are getting ready now.

Teachers, sport coaches, and parents are watching children at play. They are looking for children who will be good at sports. They say that they can tell a lot about a very young child. They can already tell if the child will be good at sports.

These children will have special training. The Germans believe it is important to start at a very young age. The children may be only six or seven years old. For two hours, three times a week they train at a sport.

When they are a little older, they may go to the children's Olympic Games. These are specially for East Germans. The children come from all over East Germany for these games. In 1983, for example, there were 665,000 younger children and 332,000 teenagers at the children's Olympics. The children who win are the best in the country.

1. Many East Germans
  - a. Like to prepare their children for the Olympic Games.
  - b. Like their children to do sports to keep healthy.
  - c. care a lot about coaches.
  - d. Like to go running.
2. The Germans believe their children should learn sports
  - a. when they are teenagers.
  - b. when they are very young.
  - c. When they are in college.
  - d. Early in the morning.

### **While-reading**

Now it's turn to apply the strategy. Open your pupil's book p. 71, 72, read the text quickly and then try to answer the questions below.

1. The text is mainly about
  - a. The different components of agriculture.
  - b. The effects of plants on soil.
  - c. Chemical pesticides.
  - d. Agriculture in the UAE in the past and in the present..
2. The writer's purpose in writing this text is to
  - a. show how chemical fertilizers are dangerous.
  - b. encourage people to invest in agriculture.
  - c. show that organic agricultural produces are expensive.
  - d. discuss how the component of agriculture should be to get good crops.

Appendix B. 2 Scanning lesson handout

**Lesson # 2: Focus on Scanning as a Reading Strategy**

*Objectives:*

1. To familiarize students with scanning
2. To apply scanning

*Reading Materials:* Pupil's Book p.p. 83, 85 (a short story).  
A handout

**Introducing Scanning**

Discussion

**Discuss and answer the following question first with partner, then with your teacher.**

1. How do you read a text if you want to know a specific information?
2. You are asked to find out the setting (time, place, and characters) of a short story quickly, How should you read the story?
3. Your teacher asks you to find an newspaper article full of descriptive adjectives. You have ten articles. How should you go through them?

**Definition:**

**Scanning:** Glancing rapidly through a text either to search for a specific piece of information (e.g. a name, a date) or to get an initial impression of whether the text is suitable for a given purpose.

**Read the following statements and fill in the blanks with when, why or how.**

- We scan.....we are asked to find a date, a name, or a place in an article.
- .....to scan? Scanning can help you remember and review important information from your reading.
- .....to scan? You should keep your eyes moving quickly and search for only the information in the questions. Look at the important words in the questions and read especially for these words.
- .....to scan? Scanning helps you develop you reading speed—reading quickly and accurately in a short time.
- .....to scan? Have questions in mind as you read. When you scan for specific information, have a pencil in hand and your question in mind. Mark the information as soon as you find it.
- .....to scan? One of the purposes of scanning is looking for particular specific information.

**Example**

Scan the news story below quickly to find the answers to these questions. Remember to skim the text first and then look at the important words in the questions and scan the text for these words.

<p style="text-align: center;"><b>14 Stores Damaged by Fire</b></p> <p>YONKERS, Nov. 12—A four-alarm-fire damaged 14 stores today in the Cross Country Shopping center, the largest shopping center in Westchester Country.</p> <p>Fire investigators said the blaze apparently started in a pile of cardboard cartons at the rear of a shoe store and spread through utilities duct above the 13 other stores. The fire started at 4:40 P. M. and was declared under control at 6:14 P.M. The center is on the Cross Country Parkway at the Gov. Thomas E. Dewey Thruway.</p> <p>Two firefighters were treated for minor cuts. Lieut. John Carey said the cause of the fire was under investigation.</p>	<p><b>Questions</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. How many stores were damaged in the fire? .....</li> <li>2. In which store did the fire start? .....</li> <li>3. What time did the fire start? .....</li> <li>4. Where is the shopping center? .....</li> </ol>
---	---

**Applying Scanning**

Before applying this strategy, open your pupil’s book to p.83, and answer the following questions.

- What does the picture on p. 83 show?
  - Can you guess what the story is about?
  - Now skim the text, check your guesses, and answer the question below.
1. Before dying Abdulrahman, the farmer
    - (a) left a treasure in the form of jewellery for his sons
    - (b) left a big amount of money in the bank
    - (c) asked his sons to look for the treasure inside the house
    - (d) urged his sons to dig the land by telling them the story of the treasure
  2. The author’s main purpose in writing this story is to

- (a) show how the Essa and his two brothers were stupid
- (b) the earth is so precious that we must care for it
- (c) the three sons are not good at farming
- (d) Agriculture is not rewarding these days.

Now it's your turn to apply the strategy of scanning. Read the text quickly and try to answer the questions below. Remember to look at the key words in the questions and then scan the text for these words.

1. Who was still studying in high school?
2. In what line does the author mention that Abdulrahman like farming very much?
3. How did the farmer die?
4. Where in the story the father informed his three sons about the treasure?
5. Where in the story the three sons discussed their money problems?
6. In what paragraph did the three sons start digging for the treasure?
7. After how many days did the sons give up looking for the treasure?
8. Who suggested planting the land first?
9. How many years did the three sons spend on the land to turn it into a paradise?

Appendix B. 3 Guessing word meanings handout

**Lesson # 4: Focus on the strategy of guessing word meanings**

*Objectives:*

- 3. To be familiar with the strategy of guessing word meanings
- 4. To apply the strategy in focus

*Reading Materials:* Pupil's Book p.p. 92, 93 (a descriptive text).  
A handout

**Introducing Guessing word meanings**

**Discussion**

How many of you believe that we need to know every word in an article to comprehend it?.....

**Pair work**

Here is an extract from newspaper article. Most of it is not there. Skim it and answer the questions below.

**A New Drug for Heart Attacks**

Doctors may now be able to stop many heart attacks. xxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxx  
xxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxx. This drug is called TPA. It may be better than any  
other heart drug.

Many doctors now use a drug called Streptokinase. But this drug. Xxxxxxxx  
xx  
xxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxx. Streptokinase can save about 1/3 of people with heart  
attacks. But TPA will save about 2/3. xx  
xxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxx.

One reason TPA can help more people is because of time. This drug is easier  
and faster to use.

Xxxx.

**Comprehension Questions**

- 1. This extract is about
  - a. heart problems.

- b. a new heart attack medicine.
  - c. causes of heart attacks.
2. The new drug may mean
- a. more people will die of heart attacks.
  - b. the same number of people will die of heart attacks.
  - c. No one will die of heart attacks.

**After-reading**

1. Did you find it difficult to understand this extract because of the missing information?
2. Is it advisable to guess the meaning of difficult words or skip them when we read?
3. Do you know how to infer tricky word meanings?

**Definition:**

Guessing word meanings is a strategy that involves figuring out unknown words primarily by using the context—the other words and sentences around your new word and some other ways related to the new word itself or certain punctuation marks coming after it.

**Pair work**

**Read the following statements and fill in the blanks with when, why or how.**

1. ....to guess word meanings? Look at the structure of the word. Is there a familiar prefix, root suffix?
2. .... To guess word meanings? Constant need to refer to a dictionary causes you to break off your reading and lower your reading speed.
3. .... to guess word meanings? If I find a tricky, important word, I try to figure out its meaning.
4. ....to approximate word meanings? Read around the tricky word and try to make a logical guess about its meaning.
5. .... to guess word meanings? Training students to infer meaning from context gives them a powerful aid to comprehension.
6. .... to guess word meanings? Sometimes a sentence gives a definition of a new vocabulary item or information about it. This information may be in parenthesis ( ), after a (--), or after a comma (,).

**Examples**

**Way # 1: Focus on punctuation marks and words like *for example, such as...***

**Example:** People moving to the countryside want to escape from pollution (for example, smog, and noise pollution).

**Exercise:** The urban population in most developing countries such as India and Nigeria is increasing very fast.

**Way # 2: Focus on synonyms or words with opposite meanings.**

**Example:** Modern medicine and new methods of food production allow adults to live longer and babies to survive, not die soon after

birth.

**Exercise:** Many people find that the city of their dreams has become a nightmare.

### Way # 3: Focus on other clues

**Example:** Please turn the knob on the left until you find an FM station that plays good music.

The important words in this example are *turn, on the left, FM, and music*.

Now, you should know that a *knob* is the part of the radio that you turn to find a station. In general a knob is anything similar that you can turn. The part of the door that you put your hand on in order to open the door is the door knob.

**Exercise:** Larry lives by himself. Last he cooked one kilo of fish for dinner.

After he had finished eating, he gave the remaining fish to his cat.

### Applying the strategy

Now, open your book to p. 92. This text is about a UAE archaeological site which shows very old remains of buildings and objects found in the ground. Skim it and infer the meanings of peninsula (line 4), marine (line 11), clay (line 17), and graveyard (line 21).

Appendix B.4 Feedback Report

**Feedback Report**

1. Strategy in-focus name: .....
2. Have you seen it before? Yes No
3. Have you understood it? Yes No
4. Do you find it useful? Yes No
5. Is it difficult to apply? Yes No
6. Do you think that it can be used in other subjects? Yes No
7. What do you think the three most important things about this strategy are?
  - 1.....
  - 2.....
  - 3.....
8. Other comments:  
.....  
.....  
.....

Appendix.B. 5. Students' running reading log

Table 16. Sample Results of all Running Reading Logs

Story title and number of students who reported on it	Number of pages read	Evaluation of what was read	Strategies used	Reported pages where the strategies were used

Appendix B. 6 First paragraph of the story *Do People Like Their First Names?*

*Most do – or Eventually Will*

As a shy girl growing up, Delana Pence got a lot of teasing from other children. Her unusual first name didn't help matters. "People would mispronounce it or make fun of it," said Pence, 40. "I asked myself why my parents named me this. Why couldn't I be Cindy or a Rhonda?" Life got easier in junior high school when someone — Pence can't remember who — started calling her Dee and the nickname stuck. "I have been called Dee ever since, except by my family, who has always called me Delana." In time, Pence came to terms with her name. "It's a pretty name, but it took me all these years to struggle with and figure that out," she said (introduction of the article , do people like .../Strategic reading 2).

Appendix B. 7: Different ways in which inference questions are phrased in TOEFL tests

- Which of the following can be inferred from the passage?
- It can be inferred from the passage that...
- The author implies that...
- Which of the following does the passage imply?
- Which of the following would be the most reasonable guess about\_\_\_?
- The author guesses that...
- It is possible that...

(Rogers, 1996, p. 301).

Appendix C: The posttest

Text A (CEPA)

Questions 1-8

1. In 1852, it was determined that Mount Everest, on the Nepal Tibet border, was the highest mountain in the world. For the next 100 years, several groups tried to climb the mountain but were unsuccessful. It was too cold and windy, and the oxygen was too thin. Some people said it was impossible and several climbers died trying to climb it. However, Edmund Hillary and Tenzing Norgay finally climbed Mt. Everest in 1953.

2. Edmund Hillary was born in New Zealand in 1919. As a young man, his hobby was climbing mountains. Later, he tried mountain climbing in the Alps and the Himalayas. In fact, before attempting to climb Mt. Everest, he had climbed 11 different mountains higher than 6500 meters.

3. In 1951 and 1952, Hillary made trips to the bottom of Mt. Everest to find the best way to the top. Then, in 1953, he joined a team of climbers to try to climb the mountain. After seven weeks of climbing, only two people were strong enough to reach the top. Those two people were Hillary and Norgay, a native of Nepal who was a guide for the team.

4. Hillary and Norgay reached the top of Mount Everest at 11:30 a.m. on 29th May 1953. They stayed at the top for just 15 minutes. After that, they climbed back down. Three days later, they arrived at the bottom of the mountain. The news of their climb spread around the world quickly.

5. For many years, only Hillary was considered to be the first person to climb Everest. However, Hillary insisted that he could not have made the climb without Norgay's help. Now, they are both considered the first person to climb the world's tallest mountain. In the years following that heroic climb, many people have reached the top of Mount Everest. However, Hillary and Norgay will always be remembered as the first.

1. The main idea of the text is

- a) Mount Everest is the highest mountain in the world
- b) Edmund Hillary was one of the first men to climb Mt. Everest
- c) Mountain climbing is a very popular hobby
- d) Several people died trying to climb Mount Everest

2. Before Hillary and Norgay, climbers were unsuccessful at climbing Mt Everest because \_\_\_\_\_

- a) the weather was too bad
- b) the mountain was in Tibet
- c) they did not have guides
- d) their clothing was too thin

3. From the text we can guess that

- a) Mount Everest is easier to climb in the summer than in the winter
- b) Hillary didn't have much mountain-climbing experience
- c) Hillary carefully planned his climb of Mount Everest
- d) nobody wanted to climb Mount Everest after Hillary and Norgay

4. Hillary visited the bottom of Mount Everest in

- a) 1951- 1952
- b) 1954
- c) 1953
- d) 1919

5. Tenzing Norgay came from ----- '

- a) Nepal
- b) New Zealand
- c) India
- d) Tibet

6 - It took Hillary and Norgay ..... to climb down the mountain.

- a) 15 minutes
- b) 3 days
- c) 7 weeks
- d) 100 days

7 - Mount Everest is located on -----

- a) the China borders
- b) the Indian-Chinese Borders
- c) the Nepal-Tibet borders
- d) the Japanese-Chinese borders

8. 'They' in line 13 refers to \_\_\_\_\_

- a) the news
- b) Hillary and Norgay
- c) climbers
- d) trips

## Text B (TOEFL)

Questions 9- 19

line Rachel Carson was born in 1907 in Springsdale, Pennsylvania. She studied biology at college and zoology at Johns Hopkins University, where she received her master's degree in 1933. In 1936, she was hired by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, where she worked most of her life.

5 Carson's first book, *Under the Sea Wind*, was published in 1941. It received excellent reviews, but sales were poor until it was reissued in 1952. In that year she published *The Sea Around Us*,

which provided a fascinating look beneath the ocean's surface, emphasizing human history as well as geology and marine biology. Her imagery and language had a poetic quality. Carson consulted no less than 1,000 printed sources. She had voluminous correspondence and frequent discussions with experts in the field. However, she always realized the limitations of her non technical readers.

In 1962, Carson published *Silent Spring*, a book that sparked considerable controversy. It proved how much harm was done by the uncontrolled, reckless use of insecticides. She detailed how they poison the food supply of animals, kill birds and fish, and contaminate human food. At the time, spokesmen for the chemical industry mounted personal attacks against Carson and issued propaganda to indicate that her findings were flawed. However, her work was vindicated by a 1963 report of the President's Science Advisory Committee.

<p>9. The passage mainly discusses Rachel Carson's work  (A) as a researcher  (B) at college  (C) at the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (D) as a writer</p> <p>10. According to the passage, what did Carson primarily study at Johns Hopkins University?  (A) oceanography  (B) history  (C) literature  (D) zoology</p> <p>11. When she published her first book, Carson  (A) 26  (B) 29  (C) 34  (D) 45</p> <p>12. It can be inferred from the passage that in 1952, Carson's book <i>Under the Sea Wind</i>  (A) was outdated  (B) became more popular than her other books  (C) was praised by critics  (D) sold many copies</p> <p>13. Which of the following was NOT mentioned in the passage as a source of information for <i>The Sea Around Us</i>?  (A) printed matter  (B) talks with experts  (C) a research expedition  (D) letters from scientists</p> <p>14. Which of the following words or phrases is LEAST accurate in describing <i>The Sea Around Us</i>?  (A) highly technical  (B) poetic  (C) fascinating  (D) well-researche</p> <p>15. The word "reckless" in line 11 is closest in meaning to  (A) unnecessary  (B) limited</p>	<p>(C) continuous  (D) irresponsible</p> <p>16. According to the passage, <i>Silent Spring</i> is Primarily  (A) an attack on the use of chemical preservatives in food  (B) a discussion of the hazards insects pose to the food supply  (C) a warning about the dangers of misusing insecticides  (D) an illustration of the benefits of the chemical industry</p> <p>17. The word "flawed" in line 14 is closest in meaning to  (A) faulty  (B) deceptive  (C) logical  (D) offensive</p> <p>18. Why does the author of the passage mention the report of the President's Science Advisory Committee (lines 14-15)?  (A) To provide an example of government propaganda.  (B) To support Carson's ideas.  (C) To indicate a growing government concern with the environment.  (D) To validate the chemical industry's claims.</p> <p>19. Hillary first visited the bottom of Mount Everest  in _____.  (A) 1951-1952  (B) 1953  (C) 1954  (D) 1919</p>
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## Text C (CEPA)

# Is Global Warming Harmful to Health?

Today, few scientists doubt the atmosphere is warming. Most also agree that the rate of heating is accelerating and that the consequences of this temperature change could become increasingly disruptive. Even high school students can recite some projected outcomes: the oceans will warm, and glaciers will melt, causing sea levels to rise and salt water to inundate low-lying coasts. Yet less familiar effects could be equally detrimental. Notably, computer models indicate that global warming, and other climate alterations it induces, will expand the incidence and distribution of many serious medical disorders.

Heating of the atmosphere can influence health through several routes. Most directly, it can generate more, stronger and hotter heat waves, which will become especially treacherous if the evenings fail to bring cooling relief. Global warming can also threaten human well-being profoundly, if somewhat less directly, by revising weather patterns - particularly by increasing the frequency and intensity of floods and droughts and by causing rapid swings in the weather. Aside from causing death by drowning or starvation, these disasters promote by various means the emergence, resurgence and spread of infectious disease. That prospect is deeply troubling, because infectious illness may kill fewer people in one fell swoop than a raging flood or an extended drought, but once it takes root in a community, it often defies eradication and can invade other areas.

## Mosquitoes Rule in the Heat

Diseases relayed by mosquitoes - such as malaria, dengue fever, yellow fever and several kinds of encephalitis - are among those eliciting the greatest concern as the world warms. Mosquito-borne-disorders are projected to become increasingly prevalent because their insect carriers, or "vectors", are

very sensitive to meteorological conditions. Cold can be a friend to humans, because it limits mosquitoes

to seasons and regions where temperatures stay above certain minimums. Winter freezing kills many eggs, larvae and adults outright.

Excessive heat kills insects as effectively as cold does. Nevertheless, within their survivable range of temperatures, mosquitoes proliferate faster and bite more as the air becomes warmer. At the same time, greater heat speeds the rate at which the pathogens inside them reproduce and mature. As whole areas heat up, then, mosquitoes could expand into formerly forbidden territories, bringing illness with them. Further, warmer nighttime and winter temperatures may enable them to cause more disease for longer periods in the areas they already inhabit.

The extra heat is not alone in encouraging a rise in mosquito-borne infection. Intensifying floods and droughts resulting from global warming can each trigger outbreaks by creating breeding grounds for insects whose desiccated eggs remain viable and hatch in still water. As floods recede, they leave puddles. In times of drought, streams can become stagnant pools, and people may put out containers to catch water; these pools and pots, too, can become incubators for new mosquitoes. And the insects can gain another boost if climate change or other processes (such as alterations of habitats by humans) reduce the populations of predators that normally keep mosquitoes in check.

## Opportunists like Sequential Extremes

The increased climate variability accompanying warming will probably be more important than the rising heat itself in fuelling unwelcome outbreaks of certain vector-borne illnesses. For instance, warm winters followed by hot, dry summers (a pattern that could become all too familiar as the atmosphere heats up) favor the transmission of St Louis encephalitis and other infections that cycle among birds, urban mosquitoes and humans.

This sequence seems to have abetted the surprise emergence of the West Nile virus in New York City in 2000. No one knows how this virus found its way into the US. But one reasonable explanation for its persistence and

<p>amplification here centers on the weather's effects on <i>Culex pipiens</i> mosquitoes, which accounted for the bulk' of transmission. These urban dwellers typically lay their eggs in damp basements, gutters, sewers and polluted pools of water. (</p> <p>The interaction between the weather, the mosquitoes and the virus probably went something like this: the mild winter of 1998-99 enabled many of the mosquitoes to survive into the spring, which arrived early. Drought in spring and summer concentrated nourishing organic matter in their breeding areas and simultaneously killed off mosquito predators, such as lacewings and ladybugs, that would otherwise have helped limit mosquito populations. Drought would also have led birds to congregate more, as they shared fewer and smaller watering holes, many of which were shared, naturally, by mosquitoes.</p> <p>Once mosquitoes acquired the virus, the July heat wave that accompanied the drought would speed up the viral maturation inside the insects.</p>	<p>Consequently, as infected mosquitoes sought blood meals, they could spread the virus to birds at a rapid rate. As bird after bird became infected, so did more mosquitoes, which ultimately fanned out to infect human beings. Torrential rains towards the end of August provided new puddles for the breeding of <i>C. pipiens</i> and other mosquitoes, unleashing an added crop of potential virus carriers.</p> <p><b>Solutions</b></p> <p>The health toll taken by global warming will depend to a large extent on the steps taken to prepare for the dangers. The ideal defensive strategy would have multiple components, including improved surveillance systems to spot the emergence or resurgence of infectious diseases; predicting when environmental conditions could become conducive to disease outbreaks; and limiting human activities that contribute to the heating or that exacerbate its effects.</p>
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*Questions 20-26*

Do the following statements agree with information given in Reading Passage 3? Write

*TRUE* if the statement is true according to the passage

*FALSE* if the statement is false according to the passage

*DOES NOT SAY* if there is no information about this in the passage

20. Mosquito eggs are capable of surviving dry conditions.
21. Animals which feed on mosquitoes may be adversely affected by global warming.
22. Mosquitoes are becoming increasingly resistant to standard drugs.
23. Higher temperatures are likely to be the most important factor in encouraging diseases' carried by mosquitoes.
24. The mosquitoes which transmit West Nile disease breed in rural areas.
25. The weather of 1998-1999 was in favor of mosquitoes.
26. Infected mosquitoes attacked humans only.

*Questions 27-31*

**HEAVY AUGUST RAINS**

Newly created **40** .....  
enabled insect population to increase.

Questions

**27-31**

Complete the flow chart with words taken from Reading Passage 3.

Use **NO MORE THAN THREE WORDS** for each answer.

**Weather and West Nile Virus**

**MILD WINTER**

More mosquitoes  
than usual survived.

**DRY SPRING AND SUMMER**

Mosquitoes nourished by  
**36** .....  
in breeding sites.

Lack of rain killed  
**37** .....

More **38** .....  
gathered at remaining water sources.



**MOSQUITO  
POPULATION  
GREW LARGE**

**39** .....

Virus spreads rapidly, eventually  
infecting humans.

**HEAVY AUGUST RAINS**

Newly created **40** .....  
enabled insect population to increase.

## VITA

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In 2004, Mr. Makni joined the MA TESOL program at the American University of Sharjah while continuing to teach. He has published three exercise books entitled *Consolidate your English: An Exercise book*. This series goes hand in hand with Tunisian English program for grades 8, 9, and 10. He presented a paper entitled *Enhancing Students' Growth in Reading by Developing Their Reading Strategies* at the 1<sup>st</sup> AUS TESOL Symposium 2006: Teaching English in the UAE: Opportunities and Challenges in April 2006.