

THE IMPORTANCE AND WAYS OF DEVELOPING READING SKILLS FOR UNIVERSITY STUDENTS

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Abstract This resource aims to provide some importance and strategies for university students to develop their reading skills, as well as, develop higher levels of focus and concentration, which also forces the reader to sort things out in their own mind including topics that might not be familiar at all.

Keywords: reading and student literacy, reading and student literacy, solving reading comprehension problems, scientific concepts, theories, and data, ways of developing reading skills

The most crucial area of all might be reading for every university student. The more progress students make in the areas listed below, the earlier they acquire reading skills. As a result, they become more confident in their writing and speaking, as well as in themselves as a result of their increased knowledge. Early exposure to diverse characters and historical events helps students develop their creativity and openness. Also, those who have read a lot will naturally be asked to answer more questions, another confidence builder for a young student.

An emphasis on reading and student literacy helps develop higher levels of focus and concentration. It also forces the reader to sort things out in their own mind including topics that might not be familiar to them at all. This type of concentration on one topic rather than trying to do many things at once leads to better focus even after the book is put down.

Reading and comprehension skills have an impact on all subjects and a student's academic performance. Even for students who have strong computational skills but are struggling with reading comprehension, it can be hard to solve a word problem. Meanwhile, students who want to excel in science classes need to apply strategies on how to improve college reading skills since the subject delves into research, which can demand many hours of reading and comprehending scientific concepts, theories, and data.

Furthermore, poor reading skills lead more students to drop out than poverty. Seventy percent of students who did not finish high school have problems with reading comprehension. On the other hand, 89% of students in poverty who can read at grade level by 3rd grade graduated on time. Also, more than 25% of poor, struggling readers did not graduate compared to only 2% of good readers. (2).

There are many ways of developing students' reading skills. These 10 ways can help improve their reading more efficiently.

1. Reading in a comfortable and distraction-free place. The place a student read has a huge impact on how effectively he/she can comprehend the material. The fewer the distractions, the better they can focus, and the easier they can grasp key points from the text. Consider these points when choosing a reading spot:

Distractions. Aside from avoiding busy and noisy places, distractions also include own personal habits. It is best to mute your phone and do not reply to social media posts or instant messages during the time they have set aside for their reading.

Lighting. Is there ample light where the student wants to read? Finding a spot near a window for daylight or make sure they are sitting in a corner where there's good lighting.

Comfort. Whether they are reading in a cafe, the library, or your bedroom, make sure they have a good desk and comfortable chair when reading. Reading in a comfortable place will help them to get through long hours of reading.

Furthermore, if the students are able to read with intense focus, they can also avoid rereading and become more efficient in how they use their time. With so much university stress coming from academic life, the last thing you need is to have to reread everything when they already have a ton of assignments to finish.

2. Doing a quick survey of the book or assigned reading. Before a student dive deep into his/her reading, it may help to take a few minutes to survey the book or textbook he will read. Apart from the title, he can also get a good idea of what the material will cover by checking the table of contents, subheadings, glossary, and any chart or table he sees on the pages.

Also, reading the introduction can help him to mind have a clearer idea of the purpose of the material. When surveying his assigned reading or book, he can also ask pre-reading questions, such as what is the main topic of the reading material? Is he familiar with that topic? What does he already know about it and what can you expect to learn based on the table of contents?

3. Keeping a pen with during reading. Taking it from Benjamin Franklin when he said that, *Everyone should never read a book without a pen in their hand. Use your pen, pencil, or marker to highlight keywords and unfamiliar terms you encounter while reading. If there is a word you do not understand, mark it and look up its meaning. Doing so will not only help you better understand the key points in your reading material but will also help increase your vocabulary.*

Moreover, you should also pay attention and mark summary words, such as therefore, in summary, as a result, hence, given these facts, etc. Paragraphs or sentences that contain these types of words can be your clues when it comes to highlighting parts of the text that summarize the main points of the author based on the arguments he or she presented in the previous paragraphs.

4. Dividing the material into manageable sections. If the reading assignment seems daunting, try dividing the material into smaller sections for reading. It can also survey each section to get an idea of what key points will be covered for each of them. Once a student has his sections, it is also good to estimate the time it will take his to finish each section. This will help him pace himself and better manage your time for other school work.

When the students are going through dense material like a textbook, do not forget to check for understanding after finishing a few paragraphs. Doing these short self-checks are important so that if you do not understand what is being communicated, you can go back immediately to reread previous paragraphs.

5. Take breaks. Even if you students are in a distraction-free area, it can still be very challenging to maintain their focus, especially if they are reading a long and dense reading assignment. When they find your attention wandering, take a break, and give themselves time to reset its focus.

One study technique that applies these regular short breaks is the Pomodoro technique. It takes long study sessions and divides them into 25-minute study sessions. By doing so, time is no longer an abstract concept but a concrete one where you need to maintain your focus in short bursts. This allows you to be hyper focused on the thing students are doing for that session instead of getting overwhelmed by the enormity of their assignment or project. It will better prepare them for dealing with **abstract in research**, a necessary requisite of life in the academe.

6. Read important sections out loud. If there are important points the students want to remember from the text they are reading, trying reading them out loud could be more beneficial. One study explored the impact of reading aloud on memory. Results for both young learners and adults showed that people consistently remember words if they read them out loud rather than silently. Among 10-year-old students in Australia, those who read aloud remembered 87% of the words they have read compared to 70% for those who read silently. Among senior participants aged 67 to 88, those who read aloud remembered 27% of the words they have read, while those who read silently recalled only 10% of the words (1).

7. Writing notes and questions. Another way to improve their comprehension is to write notes and questions while students are reading. They can write the main point for each chapter or jot down key points on the side margins of the reading material. They can also use other note-taking techniques, such as outlining, bullet points, or mind mapping. Asking questions like who, what,

when, where, why, and how and then looking for answers as they read can also be a good way to remember important information from the text.

8. Reviewing the notes. It is equally important to review the notes and questions in order to retain what they have learned from their readings. Trying to apply the spaced repetition technique while reviewing the notes. **Spaced repetition** uses review sessions based on a scheduled period to increase long-term retention. It can be an effective approach to efficient memorization and helps to remember more of what you have read without actually spending more hours rereading the text.

9. Summarizing. Writing a summary of already finished material can demonstrate what students have understood from the text. It will help to review and better remember the main ideas and key concepts discussed in the reading material. It will also reveal what points those might need to revisit in the text.

10. Explaining. A great exercise in increasing comprehension is explaining the material students have read to someone else. It can be done this either when the students have finished a chapter or when they have read an entire book. Repeating the materials they have learned to someone forces them to restructure their thoughts, which can help in retention and reveal confusing points which might need to review from the reading material.

Investing time in improving reading skills is also very important. Transitioning from school reading to reading university level text can be overwhelming. But every student should remember that reading is a skill that they can improve with practice. Even people who have a lot of exposure to reading might find some materials that are still very challenging..

Also, we have seen how reading skills have a direct impact on the academic performance of students and their chances of graduating from high school and continuing to higher education. This is why it is crucial to invest time in improving a student's reading and comprehension skills as early as their elementary years.

By incorporating these 10 strategies into reading, they can become a more effective reader. They will not only save time but also increase their ability to understand dense, university level reading materials. It will prepare students to deal with the intricacies of research, from methodology in research to polishing their output.

Based on these findings, we see how there is a strong relationship between reading and comprehension skills and school completion. If you want to achieve academic success, it is imperative to learn ways to improve your reading skills.

References:

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