

M.A Sem II Communicative Skills II - Core – 409

(1) University written examination of Unit 1 to 4 shall be of 40 Marks (10 Marks per Unit)

(2) Viva-voce for Unit-5 shall be of 30 marks (3) No Mcqs for this paper

Unit Topic

Unit – 1 Principles of English Language Teaching

- Availability of Comprehensible Input
- Motivation
- Metacognitive Awareness
- Repetition
- Shadowing

Unit – 2 Second Language Learning Theories

- a. Acquisition and Learning
- b. Differences between L1 and L2 acquisition

Unit – 3 Reading Skills

- a. Reading Strategies :
Cognitive & metacognitive
- b. Types of reading :
Skimming, Scanning, Intensive

Unit – 4 Academic Writing

- a. Meaning, purpose and forms
- b. Distinctions between academic and other forms of writing
- c. Academic substitution : Sentence formation in academic writing

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Unit – 5 Viva –Voce will be based from the Unit I to IV

Recommended Reading :

- Methods of Teaching English – Dr. Muhammad Ali Al khuli
- Approaches and Methods in Language Teaching – Jack C. Richards & Theodore S. Rodgers (Cambridge)
- Ellis. Rod. The Study of Second Language
- Acquisition, Oxford : Oxford University Press, 2002.
- Greller, F. Developing Reading Skills, Cambridge : Cambridge University, Press. 1981.
- Corbett, E., Myers, N., and Tate, G., The Writing Teacher's Sourcebook, Oxford : Oxford University Press, 2000.

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Unit I- PRINCIPLES OF LANGUAGE TEACHING AND LEARNING

English proficiency standard requires that pilots and air traffic controllers on international routes be able to speak and understand English in a mutually intelligible way. The standard affects both native and non-native speakers of English in that all are expected to be able to modify their speech in such a way that communication is made as easy as possible. In some instances this means that some form of further English training will be required for the professional's ability for clear communication to develop. It is important to understand a few basic principles about language learning and teaching.

Language Learning:

Children learn their first language subconsciously with relative ease and without any stress. When all circumstances are normal, most children learn the basic structures and vocabulary of their first language within the first four years of their life. The language continues to develop through life in sophistication and complexity depending primarily on the child's eventual level of education and use of the language. Generally speaking, all people are successful in the acquisition of their first language, and their speech tends to be marked by the accent and regional expressions of the area where they grow up.

Although people are capable of learning any number of languages during their lifetime, many experience failure to different degrees in the process of learning other languages. Adults often complain that the target language (second/foreign language) is difficult to understand or pronounce. Anyone who has ever seriously attempted to master another language knows that it is a time consuming and challenging effort. Yet, research and experience demonstrate that the only area most negatively affected by a "late" onset of language study is pronunciation; in other words, a second language speaker can often be recognized by an accent caused by the characteristics of the first language phonology. This issue is of no concern, however, since there are so many distinctly different accents and even varieties of English itself throughout the world that all English speakers have an accent in someone else's ears.

If one considers language study to mean only the memorization of some vocabulary and sentence structures with “good” pronunciation, the entire effort is doomed to failure from the beginning. The study of another language is far more extensive than that. The reader should understand the components of language which one needs to know in order to teach language. In short, the linguistic components the learner and the teacher need to know are syntax (sentence structure), phonology (sound system), lexicon (vocabulary), semantics (meaning), and pragmatics (usage). Language is a complex whole, the mastery of which requires the learner’s total commitment for life. Language learning is a process which takes time under the best of circumstances, when the learner is motivated and has everything available to help him to reach his goals.

It is important to note that language learning is never a linguistic phenomenon only. It is affected by several sociolinguistic and psychological factors which are all intertwined in unique ways in the case of each learner. The learner’s prior experience as a student in general and self-image specifically as a language learner will determine how the learning task is viewed. The person’s prior knowledge, attitudes, personality, learning styles and skills and motivation are all factors related to the eventual outcome of the language study. The most critical element, however, which appears to determine the relative failure or success of language acquisition, is the learning environment itself.

Language Teaching:

Languages are taught and learned in various places, some in informal settings, others in formal contexts, such as classrooms. It is common knowledge that second language learners achieve mastery of the target language to varying degrees. Although 10 individuals may be in the same language class for a year, their eventual proficiency level and profile will be different from one another. This is the result of a combination of the factors briefly mentioned above, compounded with the pedagogical methods that the learner has encountered. Generally speaking, it can be stated that most individuals learn to communicate basic information through a conversation in the target language in the first few years of active language study. It is important to note that mere exposure or contact with the target language in most cases is not sufficient to result in productive language skills.

Second language development follows a developmental process, which resembles that of the first language. Yet, adults, unlike children, are often more critical of themselves and have fears, which children do not experience. Adult learners are also more affected by the type of language input they experience and often control its quantity and quality, meaning that they can either “tune out” the language if so desired, or they can seek opportunities to speed up the learning process. Adult learning is a relatively conscious process. Most language learners seem to be able to articulate whether they are “good” at learning languages or not, whether they seem to enjoy it or not, and whether they want to pursue it or not. Since adults have cognitive tools available to them which they use to study other subjects in general, these same study skills can assist them in identifying personally effective and meaningful learning routes to second language acquisition.

Cummins (1988) in his classic work has separated language skills into two major categories of proficiency. Basic Interpersonal Communication Skills (BICS) typically requires a few years to develop. This means that the language learner is able to converse about every day affairs and often appears to be a competent user of the language, being fluent. However, according to Cummins, Cognitive Academic Language Proficiency (CALP), the ability which allows the learner to discuss and study conceptual, academic, material in the second language takes several years longer, being the result of years of extended study in the target language. In other words, although a person may be perfectly capable of carrying on a conversation in the target language, that same individual may not be equipped with the skills needed to study abstract concepts in the same language. That requires academic knowledge of complex sentence structures, understanding of the written and spoken language, and possession of a sophisticated fine-tuned vocabulary. This level of language proficiency is attainable only through directed academic study and, therefore, can be achieved only through hard work, native speakers included.

Working adults often have the need to acquire new knowledge as quickly as possible; yet, language places its own timetable on the learner and tends not to respond to “cramming.” Language requires its own time, for the learning of a language is, indeed, a process. The process can be speeded up by intensive

language courses in those cases where the focus is solely on the systematic study of language for several hours each day. Students who, for example, have the opportunity to attend intensive language courses may be able to advance sooner and take greater leaps of advancement than those who lack the time or the resources to do the same.

Instructional Context:

No matter whatever number of second languages one has studied, the instructional context – whether formal or informal – must contain certain key components to get success. Van Lier notes that language learning efficiency is enhanced by the learner's own understanding of what he is doing and why (awareness), being able to make some personal decisions about the process (autonomy), and being introduced to materials which are relevant, meaningful and practical (authenticity). The learner, in other words, must be mentally present in the learning situation and must have some desire to put forth the effort towards acquiring another language.

Krashen for the last two decades has emphasized the role of “comprehensible input” in language teaching. This means that the instructor must create learning situations which are not too difficult for the student. The language material should be appropriately selected so that it is slightly above the learner's current level of mastery. Swain believes that in addition to comprehensible input, “meaningful output” cannot be underestimated: the learner must actively participate in the production of the language. The learner must engage in the language, solve problems with it, create one's own ideas in “home-made” sentences.

In short, interaction in the language is needed for the learner to communicate personal meaning in the target language. Language practice which takes place in relevant context will then result in the acquisition of the language. In other words, the learner will not only learn about the language but he will learn to use the language. Knowing about the language and knowing the language are not always synonymous. The other crucial components of any organized language program are the methods and materials used to enhance students' learning experiences. There is no one correct way to teach language nor is there any one text or computer program which will suffice in its aspects. Since teaching must be based on the

students' needs, the instructor is in the key position to determine what the students should learn and how they should be taught. All this must be set in keeping in view the goals of the program. Learning should be a pleasant experience for the students as well as the instructors.

Summary:

Language learning and teaching is a complex package of issues. There is no one to guarantee everyone's success at the same rate. Therefore, in planning a language-training program, some basic questions must first be explored. What follows is a list of a few of them: Whom do we admit? How should the candidates be selected? Do we accept all potential candidates or only those who have already got the minimum language proficiency standard? What should be the minimum entrance requirement to enter the language program? Among the current student or employee population, who is it that needs English training? How do we know or test that? What should be the content of the instruction? Should it focus primarily on language instruction? How and when should the instruction take place? How long should it last? Who should pay for it? What kind of teaching material and equipment is needed? Who is qualified to deliver the instruction? Is it enough that the instructor be a trained language teacher?

In other words, program directors must make some fundamental decisions about their goals, based on their resources, which determine the type of response that is most appropriate for their particular situation. These decisions will translate into practical guidelines such as whether they admit beginners in the language, or whether they will accept candidates or employees who already have met the standard. These decisions will fundamentally alter the nature and length of whatever else remains to be done in terms of the training syllabus of these professionals. Since language is an ever-evolving skill, attention must also be paid to whether language support will be continuous to ensure maintenance of the critical language proficiency level.

The reality is that language learning and teaching is an endeavour which absolutely requires time, energy and often funds. Programs which promise language success in a matter of hours or weeks are surely not based on empirical research and evidence. Learning a language is an achievable goal, but it must be approached

systematically. Language learning does not happen because someone requires it. It happens with personal effort. It is always an individual challenge and journey. When the learner is persistent and endures till the desired standard has been achieved, the rewards of being bilingual are not only professionally but also personally satisfying. Bilingual people have unique cognitive pathways for problem solving which can only enhance their ability to think and perform. This is one of the bonus of knowing more than one language.

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Unit II Second Language Learning Theory

According to Stephen Krashen, Language Acquisition is,

"Language acquisition does not require extensive use of conscious grammatical rules, and does not require tedious drill."

"Acquisition requires meaningful interaction in the target language - natural communication - in which speakers are concerned not with the form of their utterances but with the messages they are conveying and understanding."

'comprehensible input' is the crucial and necessary ingredient for the acquisition of language."

"In the real world, conversations with sympathetic native speakers who are willing to help the acquirer understand are very helpful."

Introduction

Krashen's widely known and well accepted theory of second language acquisition has a large impact in all areas of second language research and teaching since the 1980s.

Krashen's theory of second language acquisition consists of five main hypotheses:

[1] the Acquisition-Learning hypothesis,

[2] the Monitor hypothesis,

[3]the Input hypothesis,

[4] the Natural Order hypothesis,

[5] the Affective Filter hypothesis.

[1] The Acquisition-Learning is the most important of all the hypotheses in Krashen's theory and the most widely known and influential among linguists and language practitioners.

According to Krashen there are two independent systems of second language performance: 'the acquired system' and 'the learned system'. The 'acquired system' or 'acquisition' is the product of a subconscious process very similar to the process children undergo when they acquire their first language. It requires meaningful interaction in the target language - natural communication - in which speakers are concentrated not in the form of their utterances, but in the communicative act.

The 'learned system' or 'learning' is the product of formal instruction and it comprises a conscious process which results in conscious knowledge 'about' the language, for example knowledge of grammar rules. According to Krashen 'learning' is less important than 'acquisition'.

[2] The Monitor hypothesis explains the relationship between acquisition and learning and defines the influence of the latter on the former. The monitoring function is the practical result of the learned grammar. According to Krashen, the acquisition system is the utterance initiator, while the learning system performs the role of the 'monitor' or the 'editor'. The 'monitor' acts in a planning, editing and correcting function when three specific conditions are met: that is, the second language learner has sufficient time at his/her disposal, he/she focuses on form or thinks about correctness, and he/she knows the rule.

It appears that the role of conscious learning is somewhat limited in second language performance. According to Krashen, the role of the monitor is - or should be - minor, being used only to correct deviations from 'normal' speech and to give speech a more 'polished' appearance.

Krashen also suggests that there is individual variation among language learners with regard to 'monitor' use. He distinguishes those learners that use the 'monitor' all the time (over-users); those learners who have not learned or who prefer not to use their conscious knowledge (under-users); and those learners that use the 'monitor' appropriately (optimal users). An evaluation of the person's psychological profile can help to determine to what group they belong. Usually extroverts are under-users, while introverts and perfectionists are over-users. Lack of self-confidence is frequently related to the over-use of the 'monitor'.

[3] The Input hypothesis is Krashen's attempt to explain how the learner acquires a second language – how second language acquisition takes place. The Input

hypothesis is only concerned with 'acquisition', not 'learning'. According to this hypothesis, the learner improves and progresses when he/she receives second language 'input' that is one step beyond his/her current stage of linguistic competence. For example, if a learner is at a stage 'i', then acquisition takes place when he/she is exposed to 'Comprehensible Input' that belongs to level 'i + 1'. We can then define 'Comprehensible Input' as the target language that the learner would not be able to produce but can still understand. It goes beyond the choice of words and involves presentation of context, explanation, rewording of unclear parts, the use of visual cues and meaning negotiation. The meaning successfully conveyed constitutes the learning experience.

[4] The Natural Order hypothesis is based on research findings by Krashen, which suggested that the acquisition of grammatical structures follows a 'natural order' which is predictable. For a given language, some grammatical structures tend to be acquired early while others late. This order seemed to be independent of the learners' age, L1 background, conditions of exposure, and although the agreement between individual acquirers was not always 100% in the studies, there were statistically significant similarities that reinforced the existence of a Natural Order of language acquisition. Krashen however points out that the implication of the natural order hypothesis is not that a language program syllabus should be based on the order found in the studies. In fact, he rejects grammatical sequencing when the goal is language acquisition.

[5] Finally, the fifth hypothesis, the Affective Filter hypothesis, embodies Krashen's view that a number of 'affective variables' play a facilitative, but non-causal, role in second language acquisition. These variables include: motivation, self-confidence and anxiety. Krashen claims that learners with high motivation, self-confidence, a good self-image, and a low level of anxiety are better equipped for success in second language acquisition. Low motivation, low self-esteem, and debilitating anxiety can combine to 'raise' the affective filter and form a 'mental block' that prevents comprehensible input from being used for acquisition. In other words, when the filter is 'up' it impedes language acquisition. On the other hand, positive affect is necessary, but not sufficient on its own, for acquisition to take place.

Difference Between Learning and Acquisition

The two words Learning and Acquisition can be better explained in learning a language. The inborn capacity to learn languages is a human characteristic that distinguishes them from other primates. For us, communication is not merely the ability to make others understand our intentions and feelings by using signals or sounds in an arbitrary method, but rather it is the ability to combine various sounds to produce meaningful words and sentences. Linguists, however, make differences between the way we acquire and the manner in which we learn languages. Mostly it is the mother tongue that is acquired while second languages are learnt. What is the difference between the two methods and why do linguists prefer to make students acquire rather than try and learn languages? Let us find out.

Acquisition

The acquisition method of acquiring a language is one by which every child learns his mother tongue. Here, he is not taught grammar the manner he is given lessons when he ultimately goes to school. However, it is easy to see that, without any instructions, children learn the native language and do not make grammatical mistakes during conversations. They learn the language through a subconscious process where they know nothing about rules of grammar but know intuitively what is right and wrong or learn through a trial and error method. Constant communication is what makes acquiring the lessons of the mother tongue easier for kids.

Children learn the language as communication is a must for them to survive. They are helped in this endeavor a great deal by the innate capacity of human beings to acquire a language. Though parents never explain the concepts of grammar, the child learns and masters them on his own with the help of exposure to communication in the language. The basic tool needed for language acquisition is a source of communication that is natural.

Learning

Learning of a language is the formal teaching methodology that can be seen in the form of instructions explaining the rules of the language. Here, the emphasis is on the form of language rather than text and the teachers are seen busy explaining

grammar rules to students. Students are happy that they are getting a command of the grammar, and they can even take grammar test in the language they are learning. However, it is seen that knowing grammar rules is not guarantee of a good command over spoken language though the student might qualify language tests that are standardized. Sadly, most of the adult language learning is based upon this method of teaching that relies on form rather than text, and places undue importance on the rules of grammar.

What is the difference between Learning and Acquisition?

- Acquisition of a language requires meaningful communication in the language which is also called natural communication.
- Learning of a language is based upon less communication and more explanation of grammar rules.
- During acquisition, a child is not aware of grammar rules and he intuitively learns what is right or wrong as there is constant meaningful communication.
- Acquisition is subconscious while learning is conscious and deliberate.
- In acquisition, learner focuses more on text and less on form while he focuses on form alone in the learning process of a language.
- Mother tongue is mostly acquired while second language is mostly learnt.

Differences between First Language Acquisition and Second Language Learning

Differentiating Language learning from language acquisition is considered as one of the many linguistic phenomena that emerged in the 20th century. The need for a systematic study of how languages are learned was developed as part of the cultural and communication expansion the world has witnessed.

First Language acquisition is the natural process in which children subconsciously possess and develop the linguistic knowledge of the setting they live in. In contrast, Second language learning takes place where the target language is the language spoken in the language community that differs from the mother tongue “first

language” and distinguished from Foreign language learning in which the language is absent from the setting of that community.

Many studies addressed the distinction between L1 (First language) acquisition and L2 (Second language) learning. The very first thing to address is the natural process in which L1 learners acquire their language knowledge. L2 learning is more of a conscious one.

Compared to L1 learning, L2 learners develop this knowledge by utilising conscious and cognitive efforts. Krashen and Terrel tried to draw a line between second language acquisition and learning by stating that acquisition is a subconscious process and very similar to the one that children develop in their first language.

Yule defines acquisition to be ‘...the gradual development of ability in a language by using it naturally in communicative situations with others who know the language’. He contrasts it with learning: ‘a more conscious process of accumulating knowledge of the features, such as vocabulary and grammar, of a language, typically in an institutional setting’.

The natural subconscious or conscious learning factor is highly and vitally linked and attached to the linguistic setting. This leads to another major distinction between L1 and L2 learners which is exposure. The L1 acquisition, as defined earlier, takes place in a setting where the acquired language is the language spoken by parents. The acquirer is in a constant exposure to this language. Second language learners have lesser contact with the language, and maybe as few as hours per week in the case of foreign language learners.

There are also some individual differences that play part in this distinction and they fall in two groups. First, physical differences and age: Children who are acquiring their first language are still developing their speech organs. This explains the gradual and natural development of sound production accompanied with the brain development. L2 learners’ competence is also affected by age-related physical conditions that hinder their learning. Yule argues that the readiness of the human mind to receive and learn a new language is most in childhood, which is called the critical period. Ellis describes the critical period that in which ‘...language acquisition is easy and complete.

Second, cognitive and psychological differences: A number of cognitive and psychological learning barriers that separate L2 learners from the L1 acquirers. Recent studies show that motivation plays a great role in attaining language proficiency. Cook states that bigger motivation leads to better performance in L2. According to Cook, the motivation for learning falls in two types: Integrative '... reflects whether the student identifies with the target culture and people in some sense'; and instrumental one in which learning takes place for a career or other practical reason. Ellis even adds two more types of motivation: Resultative motivation that takes place when learning controls the motivation, and an intrinsic motivation in which it involves the activation, arousal, and maintenance of the learning curiosity.

There are other cognitive factors that play a role in determining learner's effort and competence in the second language learning. Those factors are highly related to aptitude which is "... natural ability for learning an L2".

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Unit III - Reading Skill

[A] Types of Reading

Introduction

The reading skill is not easy to master of all the skills of learning a language. Unfortunately, the students pay little attention to their own approaches to reading, that is, how they read, and how they can improve the effectiveness and speed of their reading.

Effective reading: general advice

The following advice may seem obvious, but is important.

- Consider where you read. Always read in a well-lit and quiet place that is free of distractions, and don't get into the habit of reading materials in bed! (unless you want to go to sleep).
- Don't vocalise as you read. This will slow you down, it won't help concentration, and it will lead to bad reading approaches.
- Read at times when you can concentrate, and maintain concentration by taking regular short breaks, perhaps every 30 or 45 minutes.
- Set yourself reading tasks (10 pages, 1 chapter, 1 section of a chapter etc).
- Remember that reading often takes longer than you expect and you often need to go beyond set texts. Give yourself enough time!

1: Purposeful Reading

If you tend to begin reading like this: *"I need to read Chapter 6 – here it goes! ..."*, you may need to rethink your approach. Specifically, you will need to create a purpose for reading. You can create this purpose if you: Be very clear about exactly what you are looking for. Don't just read aimlessly. Perhaps you will look for answers to questions, general understanding of a topic or issue, detailed knowledge, a range of perspectives, identification of a writer's position, evaluation of a writer's position, arguments that support your position, arguments that oppose

your position, examples, statistics, definitions, explanations, quotes, etc. Try to have the purpose in writing nearby so you maintain focus. Purposeful reading of this nature can help you read faster and more selectively. It can also help your concentration and your ability to remember.

2: Scanning

Scanning is reading quickly to search for specific information. You may not realise it, but you are already good at scanning. You scan, for example, when checking a TV guide or a phone book. Scanning may allow you to ‘read’ up to 1,500 words a minute. One reason to scan an academic text that you have found while researching is to locate key terms as a means to assess the text’s relevance.

Refer to:

- assessment tasks
- lecture slides
- tutorial questions
- textbook questions

Create:

- questions based on lectures or tutorials
- questions based on a skim of the text
- (contents, headings, subheadings, diagrams, introductions, etc)

Consider:

- what you already know
- related knowledge or experiences

3: Skimming

Skimming is reading quickly to gain a general idea. Skimming may allow you to ‘read’ up to 1000 words a minute. Skimming helps you identify whether or not to continue reading, what to read carefully, and where the

best place is to begin. Skimming an academic text immediately before you read it carefully can help you consider what you already know and can help you develop a purpose for reading. An initial skim can also help maximise your interest in the text and your understanding and reflection on the material. As with scanning, skimming does not involve reading every word. Instead, you may skim by reading:

- titles
- subheadings
- words in that are in **bold**, in *italics* or underlined
- diagrams
- a report's abstract, introduction or conclusion
- the first sentence of every paragraph
- chapter questions
- chapter objectives
- chapter summaries

4: Informative Reading

There will be times when you need to do more than skim a text in the way described above, but still need to read quickly. This may require ability to conduct “surface reading”. It is worth remembering that no more than 50% of the words in an average textbook are “information” words. The other words are like glue and paint: they are there to provide connections and add interest, but are not essential for meaning. If you concentrate on information words, you can read faster and with better comprehension.

But, how do you learn to pick out the important information words? A large part of the trick involves paying attention to what the author is trying to say. Look for the message, and the information words will emerge naturally.

5 : Phrase Reading

Watch the eyes of a friend or a member of your family while he or she is reading. You will see that they move along each line of print in a series of jerks. The pauses between the jerks are known as fixations. It is during the fixations that your eyes take in words.

Poor readers take in only one or two words in each fixation.

| This is | how a | poor | reader's | eyes move | along | lines | of print. |

A good reader, on the other hand, takes in several words in each fixation

| This is how | a better reader's | eyes move along | lines of print. |

6: Analytical Reading

Analytical reading (or study reading) is needed when you want to make sure that you fully grasp and appreciate what you are reading. You may have to read statements more than once, stop to think about them, or jot down key words when using this style. As a result, your reading rate can easily drop to below 100 words a minute.

7: Marking the Text

If the text you are reading is your own copy, you could also underline key words, highlight with a marker, or make notes in margins, or alternatively, if you don't own the text, you could use little 'post-it' labels. This process of marking texts can help you concentrate (and keep reading!) and can help you identify key points and make the book easier to survey later when you need to use it again for your assignment or to revise for an exam revise effectively later

8: Intensive Reading

If you don't take notes well, or don't take them at all, now is the time to develop this essential skill! Note-taking can help you gain deeper understanding and reflection, a better ability to remember and good exam preparation materials for later.

When taking notes, keep in mind the following principles:

(a) Record publication details

Always note publication details of any text you may use. Specifically, record such things as the title, author, date, publisher, place of publication, URL, and page numbers.

(b) Preview the text before you take notes

As mentioned earlier, scan, skim and ‘surface read’ the text before noting to help you develop understanding of the text and awareness of what is important to note. Taking notes of everything is a slow, boring, ineffective exercise.

(c) Maintain a central place for your notes.

When recording your notes something should be with you. Some people prefer using a computer, while others use flash cards, folders, or exercise books. What is important is that you will be able to find the notes and understand their layout and content a few weeks or months later.

(d) Paraphrase and summarise ideas

Writing out sentences word for word is probably even less useful than just highlighting sentences with a marker. Sure, there will be times you need to write things word for word (use quotation marks when you do this!) but better understanding will come through putting things in your own words. Not sure how to do this? Say the key points in your own words out loud and then write them down. Finish by checking your paraphrase is clear and accurate.

(e) Note your thoughts

Don’t forget the great value of noting beyond just what is said in the text. Note down such things as your ideas, points you agree or disagree with, relevant experiences, questions, examples, and relationships with other texts. Those initial thoughts you have as you read may be of great use later, and it is a mistake to risk forgetting them.

[B] Reading Strategies

Comprehension strategies are conscious plans — sets of steps that good readers use to make sense of text. Comprehension strategy instruction helps students become purposeful, active readers who are in control of their own reading comprehension. These seven strategies are important for improving text comprehension.

1. Monitoring comprehension

Students who are good at monitoring their comprehension know when they understand what they read and when they do not. They have strategies to "fix" problems in their understanding as the problems arise. Research shows that instruction, even in the early grades, can help students become better at monitoring their comprehension.

Comprehension monitoring instruction teaches students to:

- Be aware of what they do understand
- Identify what they do not understand
- Use appropriate strategies to resolve problems in comprehension

2. Metacognition

Metacognition can be defined as "thinking about thinking." Good readers use metacognitive strategies to think about and have control over their reading. Before reading, they might clarify their purpose for reading and preview the text. During reading, they might monitor their understanding, adjusting their reading speed to fit the difficulty of the text and "fixing" any comprehension problems they have. After reading, they check their understanding of what they read.

Students may use several comprehension monitoring strategies:

- **Identify where the difficulty occurs**

"I don't understand the second paragraph on page 76."

- **Identify what the difficulty is**

"I don't get what the author means when she says, 'Arriving in America was a milestone in my grandmother's life.'"

- **Restate the difficult sentence or passage in their own words**

"Oh, so the author means that coming to America was a very important event in her grandmother's life."

- **Look forward in the text for information that might help them to resolve the difficulty**

"The text says, 'The groundwater may form a stream or pond or create a wetland. People can also bring groundwater to the surface.' Hmm, I don't understand how people can do that... Oh, the next section is called 'Wells.' I'll read this section to see if it tells how they do it."

3. Answering questions

Questions can be effective because they:

- Give students a purpose for reading
- Focus students' attention on what they are to learn
- Help students to think actively as they read
- Encourage students to monitor their comprehension
- Help students to review content and relate what they have learned to what they already know

The Question-Answer Relationship strategy (QAR) encourages students to learn how to answer questions better. Students are asked to indicate whether the information they used to answer questions about the text was textually explicit information (information that was directly stated in the text), textually implicit information (information that was implied in the text), or information entirely from the student's own background knowledge.

There are four different types of questions:

- **"Right There"**

Questions found right in the text that ask students to find the one right answer located in one place as a word or a sentence in the passage.

Example: Who is Frog's friend? Answer: Toad

- **"Think and Search"**

Questions based on the recall of facts that can be found directly in the text. Answers are typically found in more than one place, thus requiring students to "think" and "search" through the passage to find the answer.

Example: Why was Frog sad? Answer: His friend was leaving.

- **"Author and You"**

Questions require students to use what they already know, with what they have learned from reading the text. Student's must understand the text and relate it to their prior knowledge before answering the question.

Example: How do think Frog felt when he found Toad? Answer: I think that Frog felt happy because he had not seen Toad in a long time. I feel happy when I get to see my friend who lives far away.

- **"On Your Own"**

Questions are answered based on a student's prior knowledge and experiences. Reading the text may not be helpful to them when answering this type of question.

Example: How would you feel if your best friend moved away? Answer: I would feel very sad if my best friend moved away because I would miss her.

5. Generating Questions

By generating questions, students become aware of whether they can answer the questions and if they understand what they are reading. Students learn to ask themselves questions that require them to combine information from different segments of text. For example, students can be taught to ask main idea questions that relate to important information in a text.

4. Recognizing story structure

In story structure instruction, students learn to identify the categories of content (characters, setting, events, problem, resolution). Often, students learn to recognize story structure through the use of story maps. Instruction in story structure improves students' comprehension.

5. Summarizing

Summarizing requires students to determine what is important in what they are reading and to put it into their own words. Instruction in summarizing helps students:

- Identify or generate main ideas
- Connect the main or central ideas
- Eliminate unnecessary information
- Remember what they read

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Unit IV – Academic Writing

Definition of Academic Writing

A simple definition of academic writing is hard to come by because it refers to writing done for several reasons. Also, academic writing is used in many different forms. Following are characteristics, explanations, examples, and a list of works where academic writing is used.

Writing for Education

A broad definition of academic writing is any writing done to fulfill a requirement of a college or university. Academic writing is also used for publications that are read by teacher and researchers or presented at conferences. A very broad definition of academic writing could include any writing assignment given in an academic setting.

Here is a list of documents where academic writing is used. Some are self-explanatory and some have a brief explanation.

- Books and book reports
- Translations
- Essays
- Research paper or research article
- Conference paper
- Academic journal
- Dissertation and Thesis - These are written to obtaining an advanced degree at a college or university.

Characteristics of Academic Writing

Now that you have a definition of academic writing, here are some things to remember about the characteristics of academic writing.

Planning - There is a certain amount of planning before you start writing the paper; so, it will be analytical and organized.

Outline - A proper outline is a must for academic writing. An outline will not only help you formulate your thoughts, but will sometimes make you aware of certain relationships between topics. It will help you determine the pertinent information to be included in your paper.

Tone - A formal tone is used. You do not use slang words, jargon, abbreviations, or many clichés.

Language - The language in your paper needs to be clear and words need to be chosen for their precision. A thesaurus is a good tool to help you pick just the right words to explain the issues.

Point-of-view - The point of view in the third person, as the focus of academic writing is to educate on the facts, not support an opinion.

Approach - Deductive reasoning is a big part of academic writing as your readers have to follow the path that brought you to your conclusion.

Deductive reasoning and an analytical approach are important in academic writing. Much planning and forethought are needed to have a well organized paper.

Academic Writing Structure

An academic paper has three distinct sections - the introduction, body and conclusion:

INTRODUCTION: In the introduction, you must grab the reader's attention and identify the thesis of the paper. You can do this by starting with:

Several questions

- A quote from a famous work or person
- Some interesting facts or information
- A definition of an important term related to the work

BODY: This is the main part of the work and the paragraphs must be clearly written and be arranged in a logical order, like chronologically or in order of

importance. Each initial sentence links the preceding paragraph and the whole section flows smoothly.

Within each paragraph, the sentences need to flow and refer back to the topic. Cohesion is achieved by repeating important words, using synonyms for the main subject, and using transitional words like: however, such as, therefore, and for example.

CONCLUSION: In the conclusion, you re-emphasize the thesis and summarize all the main points. The conclusion consists of one paragraph which shows the final conclusion to the reader.

Whether you are writing a research paper, a thesis, or a paper for a conference, these tips should help your paper be authoritative and coherent. Your thesis will be substantiated and explanations clear. Readers of your paper will follow your reasoning and understand your conclusion.

Some Differences between Academic Writing and Other Writing Contexts

All throughout life writing is something which is a prerequisite of communication. Whether it is writing a letter or sending an email writing is always fun. Another fun factor associated with writing is that you jot down your thoughts in a personal diary. In this kind of writing style, people communicate their feelings or thoughts to someone close or to themselves. A Personal judgement is often included in such kind of freestyle writing, which are measured by one's thought and feelings. The moment anything enters one's mind, it can be noted there and then. There is no particular structure which needs to be followed.

An example of informal writing is “ I think that man's a nerd. The sentence uses a slang and a contraction which is not allowed in academic writing. Grammar, punctuation, or a particular structure is not required in personal writing. For example “ its cool , lets hang out.” “Omg its too late, I gotta rush home.” Hence grammar, spelling or any particular way is not necessary in personal writing.

What are the differences between Academic Writing and Personal Writing

1. The very first difference between academic writing and personal writing is that the former has some kind of structure associated with it. There is always a

beginning, middle and an end. The first part of academic writing is an Introduction part. It gives an overview of the article or the topic under study. The Introduction part is elaborated in the middle section of the writing part which is called a Body. It illustrates the topic. The last part is the conclusion which summarizes the topic and focus on future advancement. Another type of structure which is used in universities includes Introduction, Discussion, Conclusion and Recommendations. Marketing assignment help experts use this format to help university students.

2. The second difference which exists between the two writing styles is that in academic writing includes citation of particular authors. Always when an opinion is written about a topic it is always supported by some citation from where it has been taken. The referencing is of various styles like Harvard, APA etc. Assignment help services always uses the format which is asked by the university.

3. The third major factor in academic writing is that proper rules grammar needs to be followed. Punctuation and grammar are two important factors which are to be included because the person one is writing to, is a professional and not a friend to you. There are various other forms of writing in which one automatically adhere to the academic writing style. For example, writing a covering letter for an employment position or even taking minutes of the meeting. But covering letters and minutes of meetings still differs from academic writing. Academic writing focus on abstract things like ideas and concepts. Even topics like economics, social science, nursing, etc. Academic writing focus on dealing with in-depth analysis of the topic, philosophy and theories.

ACADEMIC WRITING TRIANGLE

To summarize, academic writing technique is a special sort of writing that prescribes its own rules. These practices may be planned in a structure in which to present ideas, these ideas must be supported by proper citations and references. Further, academic writing adheres to the conventional style of punctuation, grammar, and spelling. Finally, in contrast to many other personal writing contexts, academic writing is different because it deals with the deep theories and causes leading practices in everyday life. Academic writing explores alternate solutions to these everyday practices or events. A proper in-depth analysis of an event is done before writing anything.

