

Chapter 2

Teaching Reading: the reading process

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Introduction

The process of reading has always fascinated those who take an interest in the way the human mind works. In 1908, the renowned American psychologist, Edmund Burke Huey, wrote in the introduction to his book on the reading process:

And so to completely analyse what we do when we read would almost be the acme of a psychologist's achievements, for it would be to describe very many of the most intricate workings of the human mind, as well as to unravel the tangled story of the most remarkable specific performance that civilization has learned in all its history. (Huey, 1908, p.6)

Reading is, indeed, a remarkable activity for humans to engage in and attempts to understand fully its nature have been many and diverse. Understanding the reading process is, of course, quite important for teachers whose task is to engage young people in the process, in a skilful and effective way. It is, perhaps, unsurprising that the nature of the reading process, because of its sheer complexity, has engendered huge debate amongst theorists and practitioners – debates which are still on-going.

In this chapter, we will try to illuminate some of the complexities of the reading process and try to suggest some of the implications of this for the teaching of reading.

What do children need to know and be able to do in reading?

The statutory requirements of the National Curriculum Programmes of Study for English (2013) are very explicit about the teaching of reading, especially in the early stages. Reading is separated into two dimensions: word reading and comprehension, and the Programmes of Study make the point that, “It is essential that teaching focuses on developing pupils’ competence in both dimensions; different kinds of teaching are needed for each.” (p.4).

Fundamental to the vision for reading here is the claim that pupils first need to understand that letters on a page represent sounds in spoken words. This is why phonics has to be emphasised in the early teaching of reading, as it is the main way in which pupils decode written words to sound. The Programmes of Study set out a series of requirements that pupils at Year 1 should be taught to apply phonic knowledge and skills as the route to decode words. We will discuss the detail of these requirements in the following chapter, but at this point it will be useful to examine the view of reading which underpins them.

The Simple View of Reading

The Simple View of reading begins with the premise that there are two contributing factors to successful reading. Firstly, there is the ability to decode the words on the page (that is, recognise these words and be able to pronounce them aloud) and secondly, the ability to understand the meaning of the words, and how they link together to make sense. Readers may be strong or weak at either of these skill groups, but being weak in one does not necessarily make a reader weak in the other, nor is it guaranteed that strength in one aspect is linked with strength in the other. The Simple View is usually represented by a diagram similar to that shown in Figure 1.

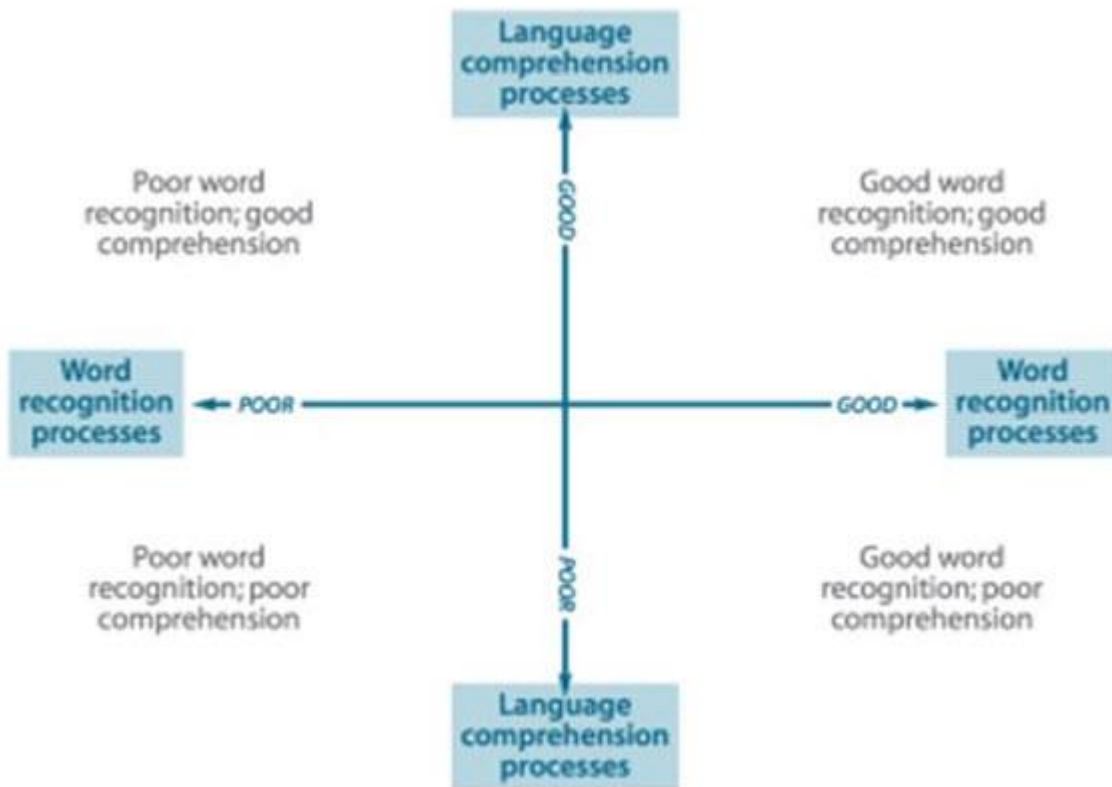


Figure 1: The Simple View of Reading

It is important to recognise that the Simple View of reading is intended to be a useful conceptual framework for understanding the reading process and how children might acquire it. It is not intended as a model of the complex and multifaceted process we know reading to be. Its purpose is to try to simplify conceptions of reading by delineating two major, essential, interacting but different components. Such a simplification can be justified by, firstly, the evidence from a range of studies of reading which tend to suggest that typically two components are identified, word recognition and comprehension, and evidence from studies showing that good word recognition skills can be developed in learners in the absence of good

comprehension, and vice versa. This seems to suggest that this simplification does not distort too much the nature of reading.

Research box

A review of the research underpinning the Simple View can be found in Appendix 1 to the 2006 report by Sir Jim Rose, *Independent review of the teaching of early reading*.

Inferences which can be drawn from the Simple View include:

- Children need to be taught to recognise and decode the words on the page. As the main route into decoding is via the matching of symbols (letters) to sounds, then the main strategy for teaching this ability is through systematic phonics teaching.
- Children need to be helped to understand the texts they read or hear. Understanding written texts and understanding spoken texts are seen to involve similar processes, so early reading teaching needs to occur within the context of a rich language environment.

As decoding and understanding are seen in the Simple View as separate processes, an approach to teaching reading has developed which separates these processes, and teaching the early reading of text can sometimes focus almost entirely upon the decoding aspect (phonics-first-and-only). This can mean that whether or not children understand what they read is not a major concern in this teaching, and that the texts they are given to read in the early stage can be quite limited – they have to be ‘decodable’, that is, involve only those letter-sound correspondences which children have been explicitly taught previously. The use by children of clues from context, from background knowledge, from illustrations etc. can be expressly discouraged, as the focus is entirely upon sound-symbol correspondences. As we shall see in what follows, the use of context to enhance decoding and understanding may well be a feature of reading which gets neglected in a phonics-first-and-only approach.

What do teachers need to know about the reading process?

We will explore this in even more detail in the chapters which follow. For now, we will begin with a look at what happens when we read, in order to try to tease out several key features of the reading process.

Let us start by looking at the following text. Can you read this?

Μπορείτε να διαβάσετε το κείμενο σαν αυτό

You probably will agree that you cannot read this – although you will accept that somebody in the world might be able to. Why can't we read it? The obvious answer is we don't recognise the symbols. A few bear some resemblance to symbols familiar to most of us, but many of these

symbols are not recognisable to people who normally read and write through the medium of a Latin script.

Subject knowledge box

Latin script is a set of graphic signs based on the letters of the classical Latin alphabet. Most commonly, there are 26 discrete signs (letters) used in Latin alphabets. Most Western and European languages use this script as their standard method of writing and it is the most widely used writing system in the world. It is estimated that about 70% of the population of the world use a Latin writing script. Other widely used scripts include Cyrillic (Russian), Chinese, Indic and Arabic.

Let us look at a text in which we do know the symbols:

ghi dfr edst ihud onitekbr

We still cannot read it. The reason here is that, although the symbols are familiar, they are not in any order we recognise as 'words'.

Subject knowledge box

A word is the smallest element in a language which can be spoken or written in isolation to convey meaning. It is not the smallest element of meaning in a language, which is known as a morpheme. Morphemes cannot necessarily stand on their own. A word may consist of a single morpheme (for example: *table, black, quick, run, safe, end*), or several morphemes (*tables, blackness, quickly, running, unsafe, ended*). A morpheme may not be able to stand on its own as a word (in the words above, *-s, -ness, -ly, -ing, un-, -ed* are morphemes which cannot stand in isolation).

Languages vary in the combinations of letters (graphemes) which can be termed 'words'. The combinations *kiitos* and *hyvää iltaa* are not permissible as words in English, where we use double consonants but rarely double vowels, but they are in Finnish. (They mean "thank you" and "good evening".)

Let us look at a text which is composed of words:

today many birds jumping near when sometimes

Now you might argue about whether you can read this or not. Certainly you can say it aloud. But, even according to the Simple View of Reading described above, that is not all that is involved in reading. Reading must involve some kind of understanding as well. You cannot understand (read) this text because the words are not organised in the way you expect. They do not follow the rules of English syntax (grammar).

Subject knowledge box

Syntax can be a complex issue. Many English-speaking people will testify that, when they were learning another language (usually French), one of the baffling points was the order of words in a sentence. The notion that an adjective would follow a noun (*une table ronde* – a round table; *un livre noir* – a black book; *du thé sucré* – some sweet tea) was difficult enough for English speakers, but then to learn that this was not always the case in French (*une jolie fille* – a pretty girl; *un jeune homme* – a young man; *une nouvelle maison* – a new house) caused many learners *un petit problème* (a small problem). And the icing on the cake was then to realise that putting the adjective before or after the noun could actually affect the meaning!

- *Un grand homme* - a great man; *un homme grand* - a tall man.
- *Mon ancienne école* - my old (former) school; *mon école ancienne* - my old (aged) school.
- *Un certain regard* - a certain (type of) look; *une victoire certaine* - a certain (assured) victory.

The situation was even worse for German learners. Learning *Ich wohne in England* (I live in England) was fine, but then to encounter *Im Winter, wohne ich in England* (In the winter, I live in England) seemed to make no sense. Why did that verb phrase switch around? The verb always comes in second place in a sentence, learners were told, only to then meet verbs with auxiliaries. So:

- *Den Hund hat der Mann gebissen.* (The dog bit the man.)
- *Den Hund wird der Mann beißen.* (The dog will bite the man.)
- *Den Hund will der Mann beißen.* (The dog wants to bite the man.)

Syntax is definitely complex, yet native speakers seem to have no problems with it.

Let us look at a text which does fit the rules of English syntax:

Colourless green ideas sleep furiously.

Now the syntax is fine, yet you still cannot really understand it. The reason is that the ideas in this sentence do not relate to the real world. You know that ideas can't sleep, and certainly not furiously. What the text lacks is semantic appropriateness.

Subject knowledge box

"Colourless green ideas sleep furiously" is a sentence used by Noam Chomsky in his 1957 book *Syntactic Structures*. It was composed as an example of a sentence that was correct grammatically, but semantically nonsensical. Chomsky used it to demonstrate the difference between syntax and semantics.

Of course, when a linguist as celebrated as Chomsky proposes that something is meaningless, many people are spurred to try to write this sentence in a context which does give it some meaning. Indeed, a competition was held at Stanford University in 1985 in which contestants were asked to make Chomsky's sentence meaningful using not more than 100 words of prose or 14 lines of verse. One entry to the competition was:

It can only be the thought of verdure to come, which prompts us in the autumn to buy these dormant white lumps of vegetable matter covered by a brown papery skin, and lovingly to plant them and care for them. It is a marvel to me that under this cover they are labouring unseen at such a rate within to give us the sudden awesome beauty of spring flowering bulbs. While winter reigns the earth reposes but these colourless green ideas sleep furiously.

Now let us look at a text which follows the rules of English syntax and does appear to have meaning.

It seemed the right thing to do but she very quickly regretted it.

Now you probably feel that you can understand this, and thus 'read' it. Yet there is clearly something missing. You do not know who 'she' is, or what she regretted doing. You need more information in order to read this fully.

Let us add something to the previous text:

Jenny looked carefully at the small bottle of liquid. She decided to drink it. It seemed the right thing to do but she very quickly regretted it. The taste itself told her she had made a mistake.

Now you have sufficient information to read this fully. We have given you a 'context'.

Subject knowledge box

Words such as 'she' and 'it', which we saw in the last example, are very common in English. These words are known as 'pronouns', because they stand in the place of a noun. A crucial aspect of understanding a written or spoken text is the awareness of how pronouns and nouns relate to each other. Normally, the noun comes first in the text, followed, perhaps in a later sentence, by the pronoun which refers to it. In the text above, Jenny is the noun, referred to later as 'she'. The technical term for this backward reference is **anaphora**.

Sometimes the reference works the other way round. Look at the following sentence:

"What is that?" asked David, staring hard at the small animal in his sister's hands.

Here the pronoun 'that' refers to a noun which does not occur until later in the sentence. This forward reference is known as **cataphora**.

Notice that the 'It' in *It seemed the right thing to do* does not seem to refer back to a noun. Rather it refers to a verb phrase *to drink it*. This phrase acts as a noun in the sentence.

'Context' is another key term in understanding reading. It can refer to internal links, within sentences:

The teacher packed her books away in the _____

You know this missing word is a noun (a thing), something which holds objects (desk, cupboard, fridge, van), and that only some of these container words could work in this sentence. Consequently, when you read this sentence, the context has already prepared you to a degree for what will come next. It is marginally faster to read words within a context than it is to read them out of context.

Research box

Research (e.g. Weaver, 2002) has suggested that good readers are more sensitive to context than poorer readers. When they make mistakes in their reading, these more often fit with what came before in the sentence and text, suggesting that they are unconsciously predicting as they read. They are also much more likely to notice and try to correct mistakes that do not fit with the following context. Such monitoring and correction demonstrates that these readers are thinking about what is being read.

'Context' can also refer to external links, to other texts outside of the sentence. Look at the following sentences.



- *The baby kicked the ball.*
- *The footballer kicked the ball.*
- *The golfer kicked the ball.*

'Kicked' in each of these sentences means something similar but different. You rely on your knowledge of external context to determine what these meanings are.



We have seen that context is important in reading text, especially in deriving the meaning of what is read. Few commentators in the reading area would dispute this. Some adherents of the Simple View of Reading do, however, go a little further and argue that, as the reader cannot derive any meaning at all without firstly decoding the text on the page, then decoding must be prime among the skills of reading – and should be taught first to young children. There is some evidence, however, that the picture is not quite as simple as this. Some further examples of reading in action will make this complexity clear.

a) The perception of letters often depends upon other letters.

Look at the following marks. They are both extracted from a piece of handwritten text.

- (i) 
- (ii) 

You will probably agree that these two marks are very similar to each other, but you cannot actually read either of them. You require more context, that is, more details of the marks (letters) surrounding these particular marks.

- (i) 
- (ii) 

If you look closely, you will see that mark (i) is taken from the end of the third word, “butter” and is thus the letter *r*. Mark (ii) is taken from the middle of the second word, “and” and is thus the letter *n*.

You might also notice that the shape at the beginning of the second word, “and”, is remarkably similar to that at the end of this word. Yet these are different letters and it is likely that without the context given by having the entire word you may well have found them hard to tell apart.

What does this suggest about reading? Firstly, we should make clear that handwritten text does make peculiar demands on a reader. Yet nobody reading this chapter (we hope) was in any doubt that this handwritten text represented “bread and butter”. You have still read it, using a very similar reading process to the way you read all text. You can try to read by pronouncing every letter as you see it, in a strict left to right sequence, but that did not work with this handwriting, and it does not always work with printed text either. When you read the word “mate”, your eye is forced to look ahead in the word in order to get the correct pronunciation for that *a*. Your perception of the letters in text, especially in handwriting, is dependent upon the context of those letters.

This phenomenon explains your reading in the following example, which is a text that seems perennially to get circulated via Twitter, Facebook and other social networking media.

*I cnduo't bvlleie taht I culod aulacly uesdtannrd
waht I was rdnaieg. Unisg the icndeblire pweor of
the hmuam mnid, aocdcrnig to rseecrah at
Cmabrigde Uinervtisy, it dseno't mtttaer in waht*

*oderr the lterets in a wrod are, the olny irpoamtnt
tihng is taht the frsit and lsat ltteer be in the rhgit
pclae. The rset can be a taotl mses and you can
sitll raed it whoutit a pboerlm. Tihs is bucseae the
huamn mnid deos not raed ervey ltteer by istlef,
but the wrod as a wlohe. Aaznmig, huh?*

This text is a hoax, of course, and there is no record of any such research being carried out at Cambridge University. A great deal has been written about it, usually trying to debunk the strong effects that reading it often has on people. One of the more scientific attempts to examine the text is the blog produced by Matt Davis, a researcher at Cambridge University (<http://www.mrc-cbu.cam.ac.uk/people/matt.davis/cmabridge/>). Even Davis is forced to admit that there is something interesting going on here and, as he says, "We know that context plays an important role in understanding speech that is distorted or presented in noise, the same is probably true for written text that has been jumbled". The text does demonstrate that you do not need to read every letter in a word in order to decode/recognise it.

b) The perception of letters and words depends upon syntactic context.

Research has suggested that not only does the presence of a context speed up the recognition of words, but that many words can be read without actually being attended to by the reader.

Research box

One interesting research study of this idea is that carried out by Paul Kolars (1973). He presented French-Canadian bilingual subjects with such texts as the following:

Son cheval, suivi by two hounds, en marchant d'un pas égal, made resound the earth. Drops of ice se collaient a son cloak. A wind strong soufflait. Un côté of the horizon s'éclaircit; et, in the whiteness du crépuscule, he saw des lapins sautillant au edge of their burrows.

The subjects were asked to read the texts out loud. Several interesting phenomena were observed. First, the subjects had no apparent difficulty in reading these texts. The mixture of the two languages did not interfere with their fluency or understanding. Second, they made several types of mistakes. One type was a translation mistake, where the reader would unconsciously translate from one language into the other. This occurred most often with the first word of a new language following a sequence in the old (in the example, readers would often say *suivi de* for *suivi by*), and with the last word of a language sequence before the change to the new language (in the example, *sautillant au edge* would often be read as *sautillant at the edge*). Another type of mistake was in the ordering of the syntax of the text. Some of the phrases, because they are literal translations, have a clumsy order: for example,

made resound the earth and A wind strong. The subjects would often read them in their more usual form, again apparently unaware that they had made oral reading errors.

These mistakes suggest that the readers were searching for the meaning of what they read rather than simply concentrating on the pronunciation of each successive word.

c) Word perception depends upon meaning.

Research (Discussed in Rumelhart, 2013) has explored the reaction times of readers when reading the second of a pair of words. The outcomes seem to be that the second word can be read much faster when the pair of words are semantically related. For example, if readers are shown the word *doctor*, then asked to read *nurse* or *butter*, they read *nurse* much faster. Similarly, if the initial prompt word is *bread*, then *butter* is read much faster than *doctor*. The most sensible explanation for these results is that the process of perceiving the first word allows us to process the second word more quickly if it is a semantically related word. Thus, processing at the meaning level affects processing at the word level.

d) The perception of syntax depends upon the semantic context.

In the same way that our knowledge of syntax / grammar affects the way we perceive letters and words, then our understanding of the meaning of sentence parts affects the way we perceive the syntax of a sentence. For example, look at the following sentence.

I saw the Eiffel Tower flying to Paris.

We do not expect that the Eiffel Tower can fly, so we read this to mean *I saw the Eiffel Tower while I was flying to Paris.* But now look at a similarly constructed sentence.

I saw the sheep grazing in the field.

We do not read this in the same way, but rather as *I saw the sheep which were grazing in the field.*

In order to distinguish the precise grammatical structure of each sentence, we have to resort to our knowledge of what is possible in the real world – that is, our understanding.

e) The interpretation of meaning depends upon knowledge of the world.

As we will explore in detail in Chapter 4 when we examine reading comprehension, we also as readers, rely a good deal upon our background knowledge of the world in order to interpret meaning in what we read. Look at the two following sentences.

The researcher was sure that the difference was significant because all the figures on the right hand side of the table were larger than any of those on the left.

The sculptor was entirely right to charge more for the carvings on the right because all the figures on the right hand side of the table were larger than any of those on the left.

The second halves of each sentence are exactly the same but have totally different meanings, which we know because of our readings of the first halves of the sentences.

Reading as interaction

The examples we have examined in this section suggest strongly that the process of reading is much more than simply the decoding of printed symbols to sound in a sequential manner. In fact what happens in reading is a continual interaction between sources of knowledge at various levels. We have distinguished at least five such knowledge sources:

- i. Decoding of written symbols to sound.
- ii. Recognition of printed words.
- iii. Awareness of syntactic structures in written text.
- iv. Understanding of the meaning of words and ideas in texts.
- v. Use of background knowledge to support understanding.

Clearly each of these will require some attention from teachers, and usually direct teaching, if children are to master the ways each knowledge source works. But it seems that we probably cannot teach children to read without giving some attention to the operation of ALL of these the knowledge sources and, above all, to the way in which they work together to enable the reading process.

How can the reading process be taught?

We will give much more detail about this in the chapters which follow, where we deal more directly with the various aspects of the reading process. At this point, what we will do is return to the part of the Simple View of reading which stressed the need for children to be taught to read within the context of a rich language environment. Such a language environment needs also, we contend, to be a rich *literacy* environment.

Developing a literacy environment

An exciting and inviting literate classroom encourages children to take part in the range of literacy learning experiences you provided. The moment you enter a classroom you can usually tell what is important to the teacher in terms of the type of literacy environment he or she sets up for the children. In a classroom that encourages literacy learning, you may find examples of displayed print on the walls, a classroom library or reading area, grouped tables and chairs to promote classroom discussion, independent use of classroom resources on labelled shelves, and places for children to work independently or in small and large groups. The question to ask yourself is, "Does my classroom environment promote literacy learning?" While there are many

ways for teachers to think about creating literate classroom environments, we will focus here on print-rich environments and classroom libraries or reading areas.

A Print-Rich Environment

A print-rich environment offers a range of opportunities for children to make use of print and practice their literacy habits and skills. While the arrangement of the classroom is often seen as simply the backdrop for teaching and learning, it can be a great deal more than that and can be made into an environment that meaningfully supports your teaching. There are a number of things you might think about.

- Charts that support literacy. Having different types of print in the classroom and using these for ongoing classroom activities will encourage children to look at print in different ways. Print-rich classrooms are filled with visually prominent “functional” print which teachers can refer to help children learn that words represent important concepts such as days of the week or months of the year. You might have charts such as:
 - Days of the week;
 - Months of the year;
 - Colours charts: with different colours labelled;
 - Animal charts, with pictures of animals and their names;
 - Alphabet charts;
 - Number charts.

- Functional print used for classroom communication. Signs communicating information are important sources of print and reading material. One source of print that can be used is a daily timetable of activities. If this is posted in the classroom it can help children to understand how the day is mapped out. Teachers can regularly refer to this timetable to make certain children notice it. Other print like this might include:
 - A list of classroom helpers and their jobs.
 - Classroom rules.
 - A morning message.
 - An attendance chart.
 - A list of activities for when a main lesson task is finished.

- Displaying children’s writing. It is very important to display children’s writing in the classroom. Children are often motivated to write more when they see that what they have written is valued and displayed for all to see. Writing can be published and displayed by reading children’s work out loud, displaying it on the walls, or collecting it together into booklets. You can display children’s stories (both final draft and work in progress), children’s responses to something they have read or has been read to them, children’s non-fiction reports, recipes, explanations etc.

- Organizing and using word walls. Learning new words and imprinting them into long-term memory is important for children to be able to read successfully. Displaying organized lists

of words on the classroom wall can support both their reading and their writing. You can start by having letters of the alphabet in order in a row. Under each letter you can write, or the children can write, a list of frequently used words beginning with that letter. Children are encouraged to read, copy, and use words from the word walls whenever they are writing. This is a powerful tool, because it helps children write some words quickly and easily while they are composing text. You can also use the word wall to teach spelling patterns in words. For example, the word *and* can be changed by adding an “s” at the beginning to make a new word *sand*. Or you might use the word wall for a lesson on forming plurals, or the past tense, etc. These roots help strengthen a child’s ability to go from known to unknown words. Noticing features in words is an important skill.

Classroom Libraries or reading areas

Hopefully most schools will have school library areas where children can browse amongst attractive books, and borrow some of these to read themselves in class or at home. Individual children may, however, get limited opportunities to use such a shared space. A classroom library area can profitably supplement the school library and supports the idea that for children to be literate they need to be exposed to lots of printed materials and given time to explore and experiment with books. It has been found that well-designed classroom library corners significantly increase the number of children who choose to participate in literacy activities during choice time. Research tells us that the more children have access to books, the more they will read and become better readers.

Research box

Clark & Poulton (2011) report the results of an annual survey into the attitudes of young people aged from 8 to 17 towards reading and writing. Their findings suggest that, although other factors such as socio-economic status and gender do influence young people’s relationship to books and reading, one consistently strong relationship is between book ownership and access on the one hand and reading attitudes and abilities on the other. The researchers suggest that, compared to young people who do not have books of their own, or easy access to books, children who own books:

- enjoy reading more
- read more books
- read more frequently
- read for longer lengths of time when they do read
- have more books in the home
- read more of every kind of material not just books
- are more likely to have been bought a book as a present
- are more likely to have ever visited a library or bookshop
- have more positive attitudes to reading
- have higher attainment

The question to ask, of course, is whether children enjoy reading more because they have access to books or whether having access to books enhances the enjoyment. Clark & Poulton conclude that, "There are no easy answers, but the fact remains that without access to books of their own young people are less likely to have positive experiences of reading, less likely to do well at school and less likely to be engaged in reading in any form." (p.5).

Classroom libraries can be a crucial source of reading material for children, and an important encouraging factor in their reading. Establishing such a reading-focused area in your classroom involves a number of decisions.

Creating a comfortable quiet space.

The classroom reading area needs to be a relatively quiet space and if you can organise the classroom to make it feel separate in some way, this would be better. The space does not have to be very large, as long as it is well-organized, comfortable, and open for use by children.

Things to consider when creating a classroom reading area include:

- Putting rugs or pieces of carpet on the floor for children to lie comfortably on.
- Using bookshelves as dividers to create the sense of a separate library space within the classroom.
- Choosing a quiet corner of the room, preferably near a window so the space is light and aired.
- Setting expectations for children using the library.

Organizing the reading area

An organized, attractive, and inviting reading space can promote good reading habits.

Displaying books on open shelves with covers that are visible invites children's interest, and you will need to think about how you organise the books in the area. Things to consider include:

- Sorting books according to set criteria and labelling them.
- Putting books on shelves that are within children's reach.
- Neatly organizing some books right side up with front covers facing forward.
- Helping children to understand the ways in which the library can be maintained.

Sorting books

Teachers need to be knowledgeable about the books they have in their classrooms. Sorting books will help you to learn about text features, layout, and levels of difficulty, and helps you to understand potential challenges in language, subject matter, and vocabulary in the books. Try involving children themselves in the sorting of books. This creates an excellent opportunity for children to learn about different genres and purposes for reading.

Including a variety of texts

A classroom reading area containing a multicultural variety of books is essential. Children need to have access to books that help them learn about themselves and about the world. You should also include a mixture of fiction, non-fiction, and poetry. By providing children with a rich, varied selection of books, new content and language structures can be explored and background knowledge, which is critical to reading success, will be enhanced. When classrooms offer books that engage the reader, children are more likely to use the library and read more books.

Promoting independence

When books are sorted and labelled, it makes it easier for children to choose books they are likely to enjoy reading. An organized classroom reading area promotes children's independence in literacy activities by making them feel that this book collection is really theirs to organize, use, and manage.

Conclusion

In this chapter, we have explored the nature of the reading process, which, as we have seen, is certainly not simple. We have covered a range of issues such as:

- The Simple View of reading
- Some complexities of the reading process.
- The importance of decoding, using context and understanding in reading.
- Ways to enhance the classroom environment for reading.

We will return to a number of these points in later chapters as we go more into detail about the various aspects of reading.