

Purposeful reading

Site: INASP Moodle

Course: Questioning as we learn: An introduction to critical thinking (AQHEd-SL)

Book: Purposeful reading

Printed by: Veronika Schaeffler

Date: Thursday, 15 November 2018, 4:37 PM

Table of contents

Introduction and learning outcomes

How do I read?

SQ4R – an effective reading strategy

Practise effective reading

Recognizing a text which fits my needs

Making my thoughts visible

Summary writing (optional)

What have I learned?

References and further resources

Introduction and learning outcomes

Most learning from reading, both in and out of school, college or university, depends on your ability to read and comprehend *expository text* – i.e. written fact-based text that is designed to explain or provide information. Many factors contribute to difficulties you may encounter with expository text, including limited prior knowledge of the topic, your level of interest in the subject or your motivation for reading the text. Another contributing factor could be that you have not yet developed enough sensitivity to the structure of the text and the way the ideas in the text are organized.

Unit 2 aims to help you develop sensitivity to text structure, which will prove useful when you attempt to understand the author's purpose for writing a text. As readers, we are more effective if we can decide with ease what sort of text fits our inquiry. To this end, this unit introduces six types of text frames that support the comprehension of expository text as well as the concept and examples of graphic organizers, which you can utilize as tools to make your thoughts about a text visible. These reading aids will enable you to get a sense of the author's overall purpose by just surveying the text, so that you can decide fairly quickly whether the article you are looking at is something that will prove relevant for your purposes or not.

Having completed the learning activities provided in this unit, you will:

- Have applied reading strategies while practising effective reading
- Be able to identify the author's purpose in expository texts by distinguishing between six types of text frames
- Be able to use appropriate graphic organizers for each text frame to support your text comprehension and prepare you to analyse the author's purpose
- Have developed summarizing skills to write a good text summary, provided you decide to do some extra work



Energizer

Before you begin advancing your reading skills, try this short energizer:

Look at the 'text' below for **about 15 seconds**. Does the text make any sense to you? Can you spot any meaningful words?

x w f r k o m h u a u s q i h
s t r u c t u r e o g u a p g
x e n g w p e p p m p g u a u
o p w r k q u e s t i o n t w
k e a w s s e e u m o o a t g
y r e a d i n g j n l h o e n
v t t e v i a o o a k u x n i
a e n x a h y l c r i n z t k
c p e b y u f i y e k e e i n
x d m u x j t s n p q u s o i
m a u t a i w o r r d t r n h
p r g o r n s a f u f v c u t
m d r c i e k a e c w r x e e
h e a a a j z i g r p u r m h
s e j b v f l u z j h g a k s

Text box produced by SEN Teacher free learning resources

Now click the reveal button.

Can you now spot words that make sense to you? Are there still some words that are easier to spot than others?

x	w	f	r	k	o	m	h	u	a	u	s	q	i	h
s	t	r	u	c	t	u	r	e	o	g	u	a	p	g
x	e	n	g	w	p	e	p	p	m	p	g	u	a	u
o	p	w	r	k	q	u	e	s	t	i	o	n	t	w
k	e	a	w	s	s	e	e	u	m	o	o	a	t	g
y	r	e	a	d	i	n	g	j	n	l	h	o	e	n
v	t	t	e	v	i	a	o	o	a	k	u	x	n	i
a	e	n	x	a	h	y	l	c	r	i	n	z	t	k
c	p	e	b	y	u	f	i	y	e	k	e	e	i	n
x	d	m	u	x	j	t	s	n	p	q	u	s	o	i
m	a	u	t	a	i	w	o	r	r	d	t	r	n	h
p	r	g	o	r	n	s	a	f	u	f	v	c	u	t
m	d	r	c	i	e	k	a	e	c	w	r	x	e	e
h	e	a	a	a	j	z	i	g	r	p	u	r	m	h
s	e	j	b	v	f	l	u	z	j	h	g	a	k	s

(Text box produced through SEN Teacher free learning resources)

This warm-up exercise may have made you aware that it is not only important *what* is presented in a text but also *how* it is presented in order to support the reader's understanding of what the author means. Of course, academic texts are always better structured than this exercise text. Nevertheless, their structure is not always obvious or easy to see. Module 2 will help you develop this sensitivity to text structure, which in turn will assist you in understanding the author's purpose.

How do I read?



Reflective activity

Think about any longer text you read recently – perhaps not as long as a whole book, but more like an article or a blog.

Reflect on:

- What was the text about?
- Why did the text catch my attention?

Now think about how you approached the text and what you did specifically.

Reflect on:

- Did I look at the entire text just to get an idea what it was about? Or did I start reading immediately?
- Did I just read the text or did I do something in addition, such as making notes, underlining words, ...?



Note your thoughts down. Post your ideas in the discussion forum if you'd like to share them with your fellow students.

SQ4R – an effective reading strategy



Exploratory activity

Watch the below tutorial about an effective reading strategy named SQ4R. Note down what the abbreviation 'SQ4R' stands for. Whenever one of the four Rs is mentioned in the video, you may want to pause and note down what it means. You will need the definitions later on.



Video 'Effective Reading' (1)

In the context of the SQ4R reading strategy, what do the following terms mean?

Drag the definitions into the correct boxes

Click on a word (e.g. 'scan') and hold the left mouse button. Now move the word to the blue field next to the definition that describes the word best. Repeat that for all words until you have filled all the blue fields and you think you have found for all definitions the right word. If you think any word is not on the right place, you can move the word from one blue field to another.

Then check how many definition-word pairs you got right. Don't worry if you haven't made it right first time. We learn from our mistakes and you can repeat the activity.

Read quickly with the purpose of identifying the main ideas of a text.

skim

Move your eyes rapidly over the text in search of a particular item, for instance to find out whether certain concepts are discussed or touched upon, or whether specific references are made.

record

recite

review

Say out loud your understanding of what you have read by relying on your notes and/ or recalling what you have memorised (e.g. key phrases, key ideas).

survey

scan

Look at the entire text to get an overall idea of how much of the topic is covered and

Practise effective reading



Practical activity

Try to apply the SQ4R approach when reading a text. Use this handout – The Scientific Guide to Global Warming Skepticism by John Cook (1).

Follow the SQ4R steps:

Step 1: Survey

As you look at the overall text, what do you notice about the main idea or message and the structure of the text? To find the main idea, scan the headings and graphic information. Is there a kind of introduction which gives an indication of the text's purpose? Make notes. When you have finished, click reveal and compare your notes with the comment below.

Reveal

Hide

Looking at the structure of the text, you certainly have seen titles, text in boxes such as the 7 human fingerprints and quotes, infographics, graphs, and charts.

The main idea of the text is an argumentation against the skeptical view on climate change. It looks at the evidence that global warming is a result of human activity and addresses people's partial understandings or misunderstandings when they don't take the full evidence available into account.

Step 2: Questions

What questions are going to be answered in the text? Recall that you can make an educated guess about this by turning the headings and subheadings into questions (unless they are already in question form). Write them down and ask yourself what you already know about the questions based on your own knowledge and experience.

Once you have finished, reveal the text below and compare your notes with the sample questions shown.

Reveal

Hide

The following questions can help you understand what the text tries to answer.

- *What does it mean to be skeptical?*
- *What are the seven human fingerprints on climate change?*
- *Do humans raise CO₂ levels?*
- *What evidence is there that more CO₂ causes warming?*
- *What evidence is there that global warming is happening?*
- *What does past climate change tell us?*
- *How sensitive is our climate?*
- *What are the impacts of global warming?*
- *Was there an attempt to "shoot the messenger"?*
- *Is there consensus among scientists on global warming?*

Step 3: Read, Record and Recite

What answers are you finding to your questions? Start with the first page (after the acknowledgements page), read one paragraph at a time and try to answer the related questions. Look at the graphs and charts as well!

Write down your own answers as bullet points or short phrases for each paragraph/passage. Note the most interesting facts, definitions and details.

Use your notes to read out loud what you understand from the passage. Use simple language. This will help you to remember what you have read later and will be very useful when you study for exams.

Repeat reading, recording and reciting until you have finished the whole page.

Step 4: Review

Now go over the first page again and repeat what you have read out loud before. Look back at your questions and make sure you can answer them. If you have problems with the answers, go back to the text and look whether the text helps you to answer the question.

Repeat steps 3 and 4 for at least two other pages of the text you find the most interesting. We also recommend that you try this approach with the next texts you need to read for your study/course.

Recognizing a text which fits my needs

Effective readers approach printed texts with a purpose in mind: they know why they are reading and what they are looking for. They can use a structure that guides their reading of a particular text. This structure will assist them in finding out whether the text's purpose meets their own needs.

The following explanations and activities will help you to become an effective reader. As an effective reader, you will find out early whether any text you approach serves the purpose you have in mind. You will learn to keep certain types of questions in mind which you are attempting to answer while reading the text.

Buehl (2001) used the term 'text frame' to describe sets of questions that are expected to be answered in a specific text (1). The frame provides a sense of structure and coherence, a certain manner of organizing the information and ideas included in the text.

Reading researchers have highlighted six frames typically used by authors to organize content. In the table below, you will find a list of these frames along with the sets of questions to focus on, and metaphors for each kind of thinking that readers of each type of text seem to be engaging in (1).



Practical activity

Download these six texts:

Photosynthesis

“Global warming” or “climate change”?

Understanding climate change

Disasters have visible impacts on poverty

Critical Incident Technique

Local governments are joining together to clean up the Anacostia River

Look at the information in the table below. Each frame relates to a particular purpose of what the author aims to describe or achieve. Open the text files and, by skimming through the texts, decide which text fits with which frame. Try to imagine a situation or a role you could be in when each of the texts could be useful to you.

Download this handout and note in the document which text serves which purpose.

#	If the text seems to focus on ...	then the text frame is ...	and the reader thinks like a ...
1	Why things happen; Why or how something works/happens	Cause/effect	Scientist Analyst Investigative journalist
2	What something is or looks like; How something can be described/classified	Concept/definition	News reporter Product developer Student consulting an encyclopaedia
3	How things are alike/different; positive/negative	Compare/contrast	Shopper Decision-maker Policymaker
4	How to do something, what steps/directions/procedures to follow; Who is trying to do something	Goal/action/outcome	Coach Instructor/Trainer Project implementer
5	What is wrong and how it can be taken care of; What needs to be improved/changes/fixed/remedied; Who is confronting problems	Problem/solution	Troubleshooter Mender/repairer Project developer
6	Why accept an opinion/hypothesis/theory/argument; What viewpoint is being expressed; How conclusions are based on studies/evidence	Proposition/support	Judge Advocate Literary critic

The typical readers/thinkers in **bold type** are proposed by Buehl (1).

Once you have made up your mind which text serves which purpose (or can be described by which frame), you can click on 'Reveal' and compare your thoughts with the table below.

#	If the text seems to focus on ...	then the frame is ...	Sample text
1	Why things happen; Why or how something works / happens	Cause/effect	Understanding climate change
2	What something is or looks like; How something can be described / classified	Concept/definition	Photosynthesis
3	How things are alike/ different; positive/ negative;	Compare/contrast	"Global warming" or "climate change"?
4	How to do something, what steps/ directions/ procedures to follow; Who is trying to do something;	Goal/action/outcome	Critical Incident Technique
5	What is wrong and how it can be taken care of; What needs to be improved/ changes/ fixed/ remedied; Who is confronting problems	Problem/solution	Local governments are joining together to clean up the Anacostia River
6	Why accept an opinion/ hypothesis/ theory/ argument; What viewpoint is being expressed; How conclusions are based on studies/ evidence	Proposition/support	Disasters have visible impacts on poverty

Making my thoughts visible

So-called graphic organizers are – as the term suggests – a visual representation of how information about a topic extracted from a linear text (i.e. text that flows uninterrupted) can be re-organized, revealing connections, relations among concepts, thoughts, etc. The graphic elements usually include text boxes of different shapes, arrows, lines, etc. or matrices/table format, and a short text (key words or very short writing).



'Head in the clouds' (1)

The main purpose of a graphic organizer is to provide a visual aid to facilitate learning. Competent learners are skilled at using graphic organizers to make their thoughts visible. By making their thoughts more clearly visible – as if laying out their mind on paper – learners can monitor more easily their thinking about what they are reading, the connections they are making between ideas, and thus increase their chances of comprehending the author's purpose.

A less graphic manner of organizing information for easier comprehension is to use tables. These tables have headings or labelled boxes which help you structure the information extracted from your reading.



Practical activity

Refer to the following handouts which provide graphic organizers:

Cause–effect

Compare–contrast

Concept definition

Goal–action–outcome

Problem solution

Proposition support

Once you have completed the previous practical activity (where you matched the texts with a frame), it becomes quite obvious which handout you would use for which of the six texts you skimmed through in the previous activity.

Now try and complete the graphic organizer for at least two texts of your choice.

Summary writing (optional)



Optional practical activity

After having seen how text structures and graphic organizers can help you better understand non-fiction, let's practise writing a summary that clearly identifies the author's purpose. Choose one of the texts for which you have filled in a graphic organizer and write a short (not more than 300-word) summary to state the author's purpose.

Keep in mind the following guidelines as you write a summary:

- Begin by stating the article's focus and the author's purpose why he/she is writing it
- Reflect the article's emphasis accurately
- Include the main points only; delete details
- Use your own wording and sentence style, but preserve the article's meaning as you paraphrase
- Include only the ideas in the article; do not include your opinion about the ideas or your ideas
- Stay within appropriate length (about a quarter or less of the original text)

The following summary structure with some examples of sentence starters may help you.

Purpose: "The author's purpose is ..."

- to inform
- to present
- to call attention to
- to raise awareness of
- to explain
- argue for
- to persuade readers to

Short content description: “The text includes ...”

- examples of
- references to
- arguments for/against
- descriptions
- the steps
- solutions

Conclusion: “The author concludes ...”



Optional exploratory activity

Examples of summaries for the six texts have been provided. Download them and check whether the summary author followed the guidelines which were mentioned above.

Example summaries

What have I learned?



Reflective activity

Reflect on your learning in this unit thus far. Go over the notes you made in the reflective activity at the beginning of this unit, and then answer the questions below:

- How would you describe your learning experience?
- Did you find the tasks easy or difficult or just right?
- What do you know now that you did not know at the beginning of this unit? Give a few examples.
- What can you do now that you did not do so well or did not do at all prior to covering this unit? Give a few examples.
- How do you expect your new learning to impact your future approach to reading and studying?



Prepare questions or issues that you would like to clarify or discuss with your fellow students. Your lecturer might give some space for that. If there is no space in classroom, you can discuss any questions with your fellow students on an informal basis in your private time. You may be surprised how much you can learn from each other!



Note your thoughts down. Post your ideas in the discussion forum if you'd like to share them with your fellow students.

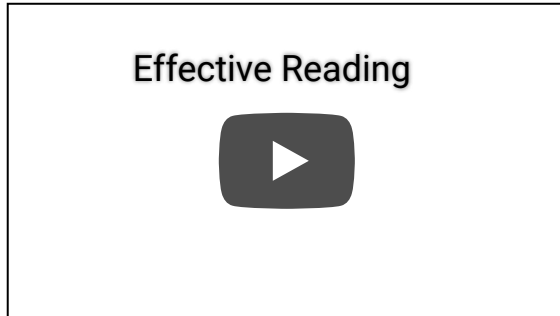
Comic from Crimes
Against Hugh's
Manatees by Hugh
D. Crawford (1)

References and further resources

References by course pages

SQ4 - an effective reading strategy

1. Video 'Effective reading' by Hartness Library (2013), licensed under Creative Commons Attribution license (reuse allowed), retrieved 26 January 2018



Practise effective reading

1. Cook, J. (2010). 'Skeptical Science, The Scientific Guide to Global Warming Skepticism', <https://skepticalscience.com/resources.shtml> (retrieved 12 January 2018)

Recognizing a text which fits my needs

1. Buehl, D. (2001). 'Classroom strategies for interactive learning', 2nd edition, International Reading Association, Newark, Del.

Making my thoughts visible

1. Comic 'Head in the clouds' by Luke Surl, <http://www.lukesurl.com/archives/comic/520-head-in-the-clouds>, licensed under CC BY-NC-SA 4.0, retrieved 15 March 2018

What have I learned?

1. Comic from Crimes Against Hugh's Manatees by Hugh D. Crawford, <http://crimesagainsthughsmantees.tumblr.com/image/158798399982>, licensed under CC BY-NC-ND 3.0, retrieved 15 March 2018

Further resources

1. DeKonty Applegate, M., Benson Quinn, K., Applegate, A.J. (1994). 'Using Metacognitive Strategies to Enhance Achievement for At-Risk Liberal Arts College Students', *Journal of Reading*, Vol. 38, No. 1 (Sep 1994), pp. 32-40, available at https://www.researchgate.net/publication/254647689_Using_Metacognitive_Strategies_for_At-Risk_College_Students (accessed 13 February 2017)