

TYPES OF READING: SCANNING AND SKIMMING

This article deals with skimming and scanning because these types of reading are very important when students read academic and scientific texts.

Keywords: *skimming, scanning, scanning and skimming together.*

Nowadays many students don't know how to use their knowledge of the types of reading in the learning process, which create some problems. The problems are based on incapability of students to develop their reading skills. As a result, their reading may not become active reading, which means reading with awareness of purpose for reading. And this will end in aimless reading. When students in university classroom don't know how to apply the type of reading in their study or research, their reading may fail because the key idea from the text will never «sink in». In many university textbooks some chapters begin with a brief note on learning goals, which shouldn't be passed over in the rush to get to the end of the chapter. These goals should be used to focus students' attention on specific aspects of the chapter that they are about to read. Without setting one or two of types of readings the students can't set goals. Saying that everything has the same value and that everything should be learned in the same depth and in the same detail may sound like an admirable way to approach reading, but in practice this often leads to frustration when large portions of the text are forgotten soon after reading. As we may see, students should read for a specific purpose using or applying an adequate type of reading in order to escape overloading of their mind with the information that is not required for reaching the particular goal.

Skimming is used to quickly gather the most important information, or 'gist'. For this, needless to pay attention to the details of the text. It's enough to run one's eyes over the text, noting the most important information. It's not essential to understand each word when skimming. This type of reading can be used to quickly get up to speed on a current business situation.

Scanning is used when the reader wants to locate a particular piece of information without necessarily understanding the rest of the text or the passage, when the reader is interested in some particular details.

Often *skimming and scanning are used together* when reading a text. For instance, the reader may skim through first to see if it is worth reading. Then read it more carefully and scan for a specific piece of information to note.

As we may see, students should be learned to adapt their reading techniques to the purpose of reading.

The aim of this article is to analyze the two types of reading and highlight and emphasize their strong and weak points.

In Grellet's words (1981) « both skimming and scanning are 'specific reading techniques necessary for quick and efficient reading'. When skimming, one goes through the reading material quickly in order to get the gist of it, to know how it is organized, or to get

an idea of the tone or intention of the writer.» Skimming requires an overall view of the text and implies a definite reading competence. Many scientists describe the process of skimming a text as follows: «too see skimming as reading for gist, a type of rapid reading which is used when the reader wants to quickly identify the main ideas from a passage» (Richards et al., 1992); «skimming is the ‘process of rapid glancing through a text either to search for a specific piece of information (a name, a date) or to get an initial impression of whether the text is suitable for a given purpose’» (Nuttall, 1996). In other words, skim reading is the practice of reading a document quickly, looking for key words and phrases to get a general idea or overview of the content. This overview will then aid comprehension of the text when students read it in detail. Students skim read to find the main points of the text, skipping over the details and just concentrate on key words, phrases, charts and tables. For instance, headings and subheadings also break up a reading and indicate to students what that section is about. By skimming through the headings and finding one that is relevant to the search, students can save a lot of time. The first sentence in a paragraph (sometimes called the “topic sentence”) is also normally important and sets out the main idea of the paragraph. So, instead of reading 50 paragraphs it’s enough to read or skim over the first sentence in each and find the main idea in a short time.

Skimming is used when reading some general question in mind; in making decisions on how to approach a text such as when determining if a careful reading is deserving; to build student confidence and an understanding that it is possible to gain meaning without reading every word in a text; as part of the SQ3R method of reading, often for speed reading. This method involves the student in surveying, questioning, reading, reviewing and reciting. Skimming is also used for the initial survey and for review.

The following instructions of skimming may be very helpful to students:

1. Look at the illustrations, graphs or other visuals on the page.
2. Notice the titles and headings and subheadings.
3. Read the captions of the visuals.
4. Read the first and last paragraphs of an article first.
5. Read the first sentence of each paragraph.
6. Look at any pictures or phrases that are in boldface or ital
7. Read any headings or sub-headings.
8. Read the first sentence of each of the following paragraphs.
9. Read the introduction or the first paragraph.
10. Read the summary or last paragraph
11. Read the title if any.

The material for skim reading may be a newspaper (students should quickly get the general news of the day), magazines (students should quickly discover which articles they would like to read in more detail), Business and Travel Brochures (students should quickly get informed).

The most important thing is the teacher should make the reading activity clear to students. That’s why he/she should give them instructions before assigning a skimming exercise.

Grellet (1981) who has designed skimming exercises to make the teachers learn the students how they can learn much by simply looking at the prominent parts of an article, by catching a few words only, or by reading a few paragraphs here and there in a story. The

exercises are not meant to encourage students to read all texts in such a superficial way but to make students better readers who can decide quickly what they want or need to read.

Wallace (2004) also gives useful tips for skimming to learn from textbooks or books: «Ask the right kind of questions by skimming through the text and think of it as a tool for learning that is supposed to help you to master your subject by evaluating the usefulness of the book and finding out where information is through looking at reviewers' comments, foreword or preface, contents page, printing history and the index' (p. 11), 'by using the first chapter where the author sometimes outlines what topics he is going to deal with in the book, why he is interested in those topics and how he is going to deal with them... and the last chapter ... for survey purposes, because the writer may summaries his main arguments and list his conclusions' (p. 20).

Students must locate facts that are expressed in sentences, not single words. Although speed is essential and the teacher often sets a time limit to the activity, skimming should not be done competitively. Students should be encouraged individually to better themselves.

To improve skimming, readers should read more and more rapidly, to form appropriate questions and predictions and then read quickly.

Pugh (1978) suggests that to assess skimming, after the students have read and completed the assigned questions, further questions may be asked, «beyond the scope of the purpose originally set» (p.70). If students can answer these questions correctly, it indicates they have read the text too closely. That is why the skimming is one of the tools the students can use to read more in less time. Skimming helps them locate the information quickly while making sure they use their time wisely. It will also increase the amount of usable material they obtain for their research.

Unlike skimming, scanning is used for another purpose. Richard and Frieds (1991) states that scanning is type of speed-reading technique which is used when the reader wants to locate a particular piece of information without necessarily understanding the rest of a text or passage and the reader can study the text in more details, reading more slowly and carefully and looking for specific information.

Spencer (1998) states that scanning is a type of reading when the reader wants to mount by steps to go through step by step. Scanning is often confused with skimming, but it is in fact a distinct reading strategy involving rapid but focused reading of text, in order to locate specific information, e.g. looking for particular details such as dates, names, or certain types of words. It is processing print at a high speed while looking for answers to specific questions. When students scan, they must begin with a specific question. Scanning for information in this way should be both fast and accurate.

Scanning is used often with technical, scientific or professional materials to locate specific information. Scanning is a valuable skill for second language learners to develop because often they do not require a detailed read of a text. There are many everyday uses for scanning, relevant to a purpose, such as reading a schedule.

The scanning is the technique students use when they are looking up a name in the phone book: they move their eye quickly over the page to find particular words or phrases that are relevant to the task they are doing.

It's useful to scan parts of texts to see if they're going to be useful to them. For example, the introduction or preface of a book, the first or last paragraphs of chapters, the concluding chapter of a book.

This exercise practices scanning – that means reading very fast to find specific pieces of information and locate answers to the questions.

Every second, one hectare of the world's rainforest is destroyed. That's equivalent to two football fields. An area the size of New York City is lost every day. In a year, that adds up to 31 million hectares -- more than the land area of Poland. This alarming rate of destruction has serious consequences for the environment; scientists estimate, for example, that 137 species of plant, insect or animal become extinct every day due to logging. In British Columbia, where, since 1990, thirteen rainforest valleys have been clear-cut, 142 species of salmon have already become extinct, and the habitats of grizzly bears, wolves and many other creatures are threatened. Logging, however, provides jobs, profits, taxes for the government and cheap products of all kinds for consumers, so the government is reluctant to restrict or control it.

How many species of salmon have become extinct in BC?

A 27

B 31

C 137

D 142

Much of Canada's forestry production goes towards making pulp and paper. According to the Canadian Pulp and Paper Association, Canada supplies 34% of the world's wood pulp and 49% of its newsprint paper. If these paper products could be produced in some other way, Canadian forests could be preserved. Recently, a possible alternative way of producing paper has been suggested by agriculturalists and environmentalists: a plant called hemp.

How much of the world's newsprint paper is supplied by Canada?

A 31%

B 49%

C 34%

D 19%

The teacher selects passages that do include specific information. The teacher may use authentic materials that are commonly scanned in real life, such as the telephone directory, menus, bus schedules. The teacher may ask students before they scan a text to note how the information is organized in the text.

The teacher needs to remind students that as they read carefully to find the required information, they should pay particular attention to titles and keywords.

Brown in Simon Juntak (1987) advocated that motivation is the key to being successful in learning. Motivation is commonly understood as an inner drive, impulse, emotion, or desire that moves one to the particular action. One of the ways to motivate students to read is through implementing the right techniques in teaching reading. In line with the present study, the researcher made use of scanning technique in improving the students' reading ability.

Scanning consists of quickly searching for some particular piece or pieces of information in a text. Scanning exercises may ask students to look for names or dates, to find a definition of a key concept, or to list a certain number of supporting details. The purpose of the scanning is to extract certain specific information without reading through the whole text. For academic English scanning is absolutely essential. In vocational or general English, scanning is important in dealing with genres like schedules, manuals, forms, etc.

The students form questions before reading. What specific information are they looking for? The students look for contextual clues. The students try to anticipate what the answer might look like and what sorts of clues would be useful.

The students are aware of the graphic form that the answer may take, such as a numeral, a written number, a capitalized word or a short phrase that includes key words.

Activities may include exercises that are devised by the teacher in which students scan for a single word or specific text. Activities may include exercises that are often carried on as a competition so students will work quickly. Students use skills of prediction and anticipation. Students may do any of the following:

1. Make predictions and guesses.
2. Use titles and tables of contents to get an idea of what a passage is about.
3. Activate prior knowledge about the topic of the passage by answering some questions or performing a quiz.
4. Anticipate what they want to learn about the top.
5. Use titles, pictures, and prior knowledge to anticipate the contents of the text.
6. Use key words, that may have been given to them by the teacher, that do not appear in the text, that allude to the main idea.

So, the teacher's task is to find out if students can identify differences between skimming and scanning. For this, he/she should remind students to look for words in boldface or italics when they are scanning, and to pay attention to details like fonts (typefaces), as well as to numbers.

Skimming and scanning are sometimes referred to as types of reading and at other times, as skills. Skimming involves a thorough overview of a text and implies a reading competence. Scanning is more a limited activity, only retrieving information relevant to a purpose.

Brown (1994) suggested that «perhaps the two most valuable reading strategies for learners as well as native speakers are skimming and scanning.»

Pugh (1978) suggested that since scanning is a less complex style of reading it can be introduced first. Skimming requires greater fluency and more practice is required, so it should be introduced later.

R. Jordan (1999) wrote “skimming is reading quickly for the main idea or gist and scanning is reading quickly for a specific piece of information, and the both skills can be used for distinguishing between:

1. Factual and non factual information
2. Important and less important items
3. Relevant and irrelevant information
4. Idea and examples and opinion
5. Explicit and implicit information
6. Deducing unknown words
7. Relationship between and within sentences
8. Understanding graphics presentation «Data, diagram, etc.»

Skimming and scanning are very important reading techniques. In short, skimming refers to looking through material quickly to gather a general sense of the ideas, information, or topic itself. When we skim, we read through an article three to four times faster than when we read each word. Scanning refers to reading through material to find specific information. When we scan, you run our eyes over text or information to pull out specific words, phrases, or data. Skimming and scanning work in tandem. For English learners, both techniques should always be encouraged because, with practice, students realize that every word doesn't need to be read and fully understood. Good skimming and scanning skills means that they will no longer be so strictly bound by the text, nor their reading and comprehension speed.

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Кабас Джаміль Рашид

ВИДИ ЧИТАННЯ: ПЕРЕГЛЯДОВЕ І ПОШУКОВЕ ЧИТАННЯ.

У статті йдеться про переглядове і пошукове читання, яке може розглядатися як окремі види читання і як такі, що можуть використовуватися одночасно при читанні академічних і наукових текстів.

Ключові слова: *переглядове читання, пошукове читання, комбіноване читання*

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ВИДЫ ЧТЕНИЯ: ПРОСМОТРОВОЕ И ИЗУЧАЮЩЕЕ ЧТЕНИЕ.

В статье рассматриваются два вида чтения: просмотровое и изучающее. Они могут использоваться как самостоятельные виды чтения, а также комбинироваться в зависимости от цели чтения академических и научных текстов.

Ключевые слова: *просмотровое чтение, изучающее чтение, комбинированное чтение*