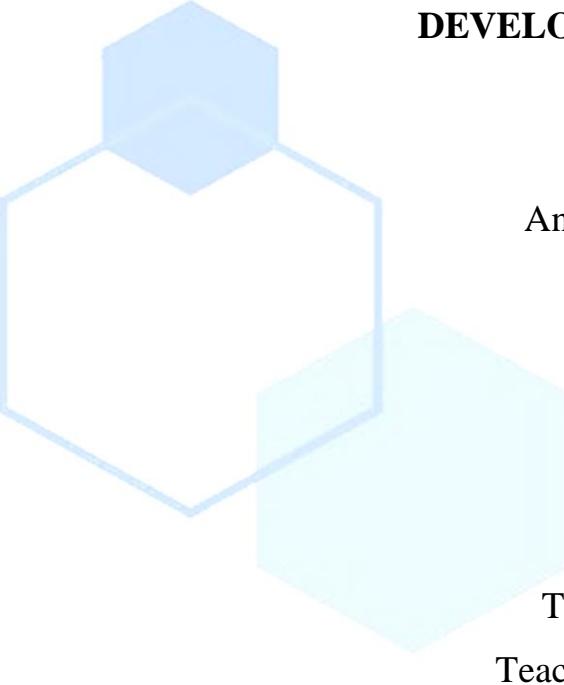


THE ROLE OF READING IN ACADEMIC AND COGNITIVE DEVELOPMENT



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Abstract

Reading plays a crucial role in both academic achievement and cognitive development. It enhances attention, working memory, and metacognitive skills, enabling learners to monitor understanding, evaluate information, and reflect on meaning. Engagement with diverse texts—ranging from argumentative and scientific materials to fiction—fosters critical and creative thinking, strengthens problem-solving abilities, and promotes empathy and perspective-taking. Furthermore, reading enriches vocabulary, supports syntactic awareness, and improves verbal reasoning, contributing to more effective communication. This article examines how reading cultivates these cognitive and academic skills, highlighting its significance in preparing individuals for complex learning tasks and lifelong intellectual growth.

Keywords: cognitive activities, critical and creative thinking skills, word decoding, language comprehension

The modern digital environment is characterised by a significant increase in information flow, which acquires critical and creative thinking skills and effective information management abilities essential. Reading serves as a fundamental tool in

developing these skills, as it engages individuals in the active processing, evaluation, and synthesis of information, while simultaneously enhancing attention, memory, and cognitive flexibility.

Reading plays a fundamental role in the development of attention and working memory. The cognitive processes involved in organising text into logical units, tracking cause-and-effect relationships, and interpreting characters' motivations contribute to the expansion of working memory capacity and the ability to sustain focused attention. Simultaneously, continuous exposure to rich vocabulary and diverse syntactic structures enhances verbal reasoning, promotes cognitive flexibility, and improves overall communicative competence, including both written and oral expression. These cognitive activities enhance working memory capacity and the ability to sustain attention over extended periods. Such skills are essential for learning across disciplines, particularly in tasks requiring concentration, comprehension, and problem-solving. Furthermore, regular engagement with texts enriches vocabulary and familiarises readers with a wide range of syntactic structures. This linguistic exposure strengthens verbal reasoning, improves cognitive flexibility, and supports clearer and more structured thinking. As a result, reading contributes to the development of effective communication skills and a higher culture of both written and oral expression.

Reading also serves as a powerful catalyst for the development of critical and creative thinking skills. Engagement with argumentative and scientific-popular texts requires readers to evaluate the credibility of sources, assess the quality of evidence, interpret statistical information, and analyse the coherence between arguments and conclusions. In contrast, fiction fosters empathy and perspective-taking, activating creative cognitive mechanisms such as generating novel associations and exploring alternative solutions. The interaction of these analytical and imaginative dimensions strengthens individuals' capacity to address complex academic and real-world problems.

Through reading, learners develop metacognitive skills such as monitoring understanding, questioning implicit assumptions, and engaging in reflective

interpretation. These competencies are particularly significant in higher education, which demands autonomous learning and critical engagement with scholarly materials.

The Simple View of Reading

It is helpful to distinguish between two main components in reading: word decoding and language comprehension. Word reading (or decoding) refers to the ability to read single words out of context. Language comprehension refers to our ability to understand words, sentences, and text. These are the two key components in The Simple View of Reading (originally proposed by Gough & Tunmer, 1986).

The point of The Simple View of Reading is that variation in reading ability can be captured (simply) in only two components: word reading (decoding) and language comprehension. The name, The Simple View of Reading, is not intended to imply that reading (or learning to read) is a simple process, but rather, that it is a simple way of conceptualising the complexity of reading. [3]

Great attention is paid in Uzbekistan to the issue of the moral development of young people, their upbringing in the spirit of humanity. The strategic tasks of developing our country and strengthening its independence, proposed by our President Sh.M. Mirziyoev, include the training of a spiritually mature, harmonious generation and competitive personnel, as well as the upbringing of young people with a strong sense of national pride who can help society in solving social problems. [1] In implementing these tasks, “we rely on our national traditions formed over the centuries, the rich heritage of our ancestors” [2] and the upbringing of the growing younger generation in the spirit of universal human values built based on Eastern education imposes a huge responsibility on society.

Conclusion

Reading plays a vital role in both academic and cognitive development. It supports the growth of attention, memory, language competence, and higher-order thinking

skills. By fostering critical analysis and creative imagination, reading equips learners with the cognitive tools necessary for academic success and lifelong learning. Therefore, promoting reading culture within educational systems is essential for developing intellectually capable and adaptable individuals.

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