



FUNCTIONS AND RELEVANCE OF A NEWSPAPER IN ENHANCING READING ABILITY

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Newspapers are a tool for educational and personal empowerment. Newspapers are the best sources for the information and evolution in every field. Newspapers have to become more independent, more economical interpreter of information. It helps for the development of skills for the intellectual and personal empowerment. In the 21st century newspaper plays an essential role because they provide global information for every person whether he or she is businessman, politician, shopkeeper, teacher and student.

Newspapers are one of the few sources of information that are comprehensive, interconnected, and offered in one format. They provide application of the information reading, critical thinking, analytical skills, and synthesis skills needed for comprehension. Newspapers help college students to make connections among different fields, subjects, topics, issues, and events, and hence help them ask the right questions. Newspapers must enable students, statements, behaviors, and hands-on issues of candidates, and provide verbatim transcripts. It also enables to students for reading the texts of important speeches, press releases, statements, and reports so they can draw their own conclusions. No doubt, newspaper is more important for the development of analytical skill and critical skill but there are many students who don't read newspaper. Newspaper nonreaders were defined as those who offer a negative response to have read a newspaper yesterday or today? There are many reason because of lack of time of read, the high cost of the newspaper, too much advertising, large size of newspaper, the editorial stance of the newspaper and dissatisfaction with new coverage.

There are different arguments of non-readers newspaper like some believe that they have less time, extra work load. Some believe that newspaper present more negative daily news like terrorism, rape, accident, murders which affect on the students. Some researchers believe that mostly female college students don't read newspaper because they give preference to the bookish content material. Some believe that they prefer to use another medium; television, radio and magazines for news and information [1]. They also believe that tough language, newspaper content or dislike of reading which effect on the non-reader. After discussion about newspaper reading we can conclude that newspaper increase different skills and abilities.

And first of them is a critical thinking. Critical thinking is essential in history because all students need to evaluate, assess, analyze, conceptualize, and judge what is presented as information or facts. Critical thinking skills are important in a democracy where citizens need to be informed in order to make judgments and decisions. Critical



thinking skills consist of fundamental concepts of how we understand and learn and are the epitome of education critical thinking is “the process of evaluating what other people say or write to determine whether to believe their statements.” Critical thinking consists of “assessing authenticity, accuracy, and worth of knowledge claims and arguments.” Critical thinking is purposeful and reflective judgment about what to believe or do in response to observations, experience, verbal or written expressions, or arguments. Critical thinking might involve determining the meaning and significance of what is observed or expressed or concerning a given inference or argument, determining whether there is adequate justification to accept the conclusion as true. Hence, Fisher & Scriven define critical thinking as “Skilled, active, interpretation and evaluation of observations, communications, information, and argumentation” [2].

Critical thinking gives due consideration to the evidence, the context of judgment, the relevant criteria for making the judgment well, the applicable methods or techniques for forming the judgment, and the applicable theoretical constructs for understanding the nature of the problem and the question at hand. Critical thinking employs not only logic but broad intellectual criteria such as clarity, credibility, accuracy, precision, relevance, depth, breadth, significance and fairness. Critical thinking can occur whenever one judges, decides, or solves a problem; in general, whenever one must figure out what to believe or what to do, and do so in a reasonable and reflective way. Reading, writing, speaking, and listening can all be done critically or uncritically. Critical thinking is crucial to becoming a close reader and a substantive writer. It can be developed with the help of some tools raises vital questions and problems, formulating them clearly and precisely; gathers and assesses relevant information, using abstract ideas to interpret it effectively; comes to well-reasoned conclusions and solutions, testing them against relevant criteria and standards; thinks open-mindedly within alternative systems of thought, recognizing and assessing, as need be, their assumptions, implications, and practical consequences; and communicates effectively with others in figuring out solutions to complex problems; without being unduly influenced by others thinking on the topic.

Critical thinking is about being both willing and able to evaluate one's thinking. Thinking might be criticized because one does not have all the relevant information - indeed, important information may remain undiscovered, or the information may not even be knowable, or because one makes unjustified inferences, uses inappropriate concepts, or fails to notice important implications [3]. One's thinking may be unclear, inaccurate, imprecise, irrelevant, narrow, shallow, illogical, or trivial, due to ignorance or misapplication of the appropriate skills of thinking. On the other hand, one's thinking might be criticized as being the result of a sub-optimal disposition. The dispositional dimension of critical thinking is characterological. Its focus is in developing the habitual intention to be truth-seeking, open-minded, systematic, analytical, inquisitive, confident in reasoning, and prudent in making judgments. Those who are ambivalent on one or more of these aspects of the disposition toward critical thinking, or who have an opposite disposition [and are intellectually arrogant, biased, intolerant, disorganized, lazy, heedless of consequences, indifferent toward new information, mistrustful of reasoning, imprudent are more likely to encounter problems in using their critical thinking skills. Failure to recognize the importance of correct dispositions can lead to various forms of



self-deception and closed-mindedness, both individually and collectively. When persons possess intellectual skills alone, without the intellectual traits of mind, weak sense critical thinking results. Fair-minded or strong sense critical thinking requires intellectual humility, empathy, integrity, perseverance, courage, autonomy, confidence in reason, and other intellectual traits. Thus, critical thinking without essential intellectual traits often results in clever, but manipulative and often unethical, thought. In short, the sophist, the con artist, the manipulator often uses intellectually defective but effective forms of thought. While critical thinking skills might be considered largely «objective», few humans notice the degree to which they uncritically fail to discern their own “subjectivity” and one-sidedness [4].

And next one is a logical thinking. Logical thinking is thinking in terms of causes and consequences, which in its turn means that it is sequential thinking. Logical thinking means following a train of thought. It is like looking into and predicting the future: if this happens, then that will happen. However, this has nothing to do with fortune telling. It is based on the interpretation of certain prevalent conditions and then predicting what will happen if the same conditions continue to prevail. ability to think logically is of immense practical importance in our daily lives. Day after day, from moment to moment, we are busy interpreting available evidence and making predictions on what will happen next. When I walk along the sidewalk, it is my interpretation of the available evidence that leads me to the conclusion that it will be safe to put a foot forward for the next step. The moment conditions change — for example, if I hear a gunshot — I may have to reinterpret, and may then conclude that it is no longer safe to put a foot forward for a next step. Logical thinking is not only of great importance in our everyday lives, but is also a skill that is indispensable for children in school. Very little of what happens in any learning situation is not dependent on logical thinking. It is therefore of the utmost importance that parents should as early in life as possible teach their children this very important skill. Newspaper develop comprehend reading and skills of students. It helps to use the information in critical and logically way. It helps to synthesize the information analytically. So, analytically abilities are formed collectively in critically and logically thinking.

And the last one is analytical thinking. It develops the capacity to think in thoughtful, discerning way, to solve the problem, analyzes the data, recall and use information. The ability of scrutinize and break down fact and thoughts into their strengths and weakness. Analysis task, therefore, is not to describe the work. Its task, essentially, is to reveal as clearly as possible the problem of each particular work. “To Analyze” means much the same as to become aware of a work as a force-field organized around a problem. It is referred by B.S. Bloom as intellectual abilities and skills [5]. This ability plays a very important part during the college career of any students. When the idea is presented one after the other, how far the student is able to analysis the relationship existing among them so that he/she can have total grasp of all the idea put together is known from the amount of this ability one possesses. Newspaper article in which idea are well-sknit, one idea follows another in a logically connected fashion. In fact, in such articles one idea will be clear only one has a clear analysis of the previous one. When two ideas are such that the understanding of the first idea is prerequisite for understanding the second, they may be said to be connected. One is said to have analysis



the first idea. If he obtains a complete knowledge of its implications, its meaning in various context etc., applies it another situation and gets a clear idea of the basis first one. If this process carried out in the reader's mind, the reader may be said to have analysis between two ideas [6].

Besides language learners can earn a lot of benefits from newspapers, especially when it comes to their reading skills. Learners would be taught two techniques: skimming and scanning. These techniques would enable them to identify the general idea and main details of an article within a minimum of time. Furthermore, learners would be introduced to two forms of reading: intensive and extensive reading. In intensive reading, learners would tackle articles closely and become aware of text organization, justify the use of certain context based expressions and get acquainted with different writing styles used in different types of articles. It is worth adding that intensive reading sometimes requires handling difficult readings which might usually exceeds the learners' level of comprehension. However, such practice would normally be considered a boost to the learners' abilities. On the other hand, extensive reading would allow learners to practice reading on a daily basis and thus get familiar with a good number of topics and articles classified under different genres.

Nelson said this in 1976: "One cannot master English spelling unless one read widely." Thus reading newspaper can make one to read faster and meaningful, in addition, is become paramount to mote that all language skills are interrelated. In short, a newspaper has got following functions:

- Newspaper enables one to know more about one's self, to solve problems, both personal and general issues.
- Life and society are dynamic, so newspaper is necessary to take care of the changing nature of life, so as to give students an insight in to what is happening and changes in the society.
- Newspaper assists both libraries and information agencies in the state and in the nation, because it serves as the starting point of obtaining new information.
- Newspaper enhances reading ability, and increase commands of language and reading skills in general.

I found a poll that was taken from students of one university in Nigeria. This poll was conducted in the form of questionnaire. The aims of this research was written below:

- To collect information about educational element found in newspaper which can enhances reading ability among students of English language in Usmanu Danfodiyo University, Sokoto.
- To collect information about educational materials contained in newspaper which student of English language are conversant of familiar with. And other likely problems which students encounter in relation to reading newspapers.
- To collect information on why some students find it difficult to read newspaper. And also to find out the target population, that is who fill the questionnaires from which department he or she belong to? And also to obtained information about the level of those who filled the questionnaire.

All this information obtained are useful to the research or one can say are the basic tools of the business in finding the required information.



The results of the poll were published in table form. So I would like show them shortly [7].

Here Q is a question; A is an answer.

Q1: Do you read a newspaper?

A: 45 respondents representing 75% are those who read newspaper much than those who do not read. While those who not read were 15 respondents representing 25% from the respondents.

Q2. What kind of newspaper do you read?

A: Those who read weekly newspapers were 20 representing 33.3% while those who read evening newspaper were 15 representing 25%, like wise those who preferred to read daily newspapers were 10 represent 16.7% and those who read sport newspapers were 15 representing 25% from the all total respondents.

Q3. What time or period do you read a newspaper?

A: Twenty two respondents preferred to read newspapers in the morning time, which represent 36.7% while on the other hand 14 respondents preferred to read newspapers in evening time representing 23.3% while 13 respondents decided to read newspaper in the night time representing 21.7% and eleven respondents are to read newspapers in any time representing 18.3% from the total respondents.

Q4. How often do you read a newspaper?

A: Majority of the students read newspapers weekly while small number of students assert that they read newspapers daily.

Q5. Do you comprehend all what you read?

A: It is clear that majority of students comprehend all what they read in the newspaper, because they were thirty-nine (39) respondents representing 65% while twenty-one respondents said they read newspapers but they do not comprehend all what they read which represent 35% from the total respondent.

Q6. Do you have a favorite newspaper?

A: Twenty five (25) respondents have their favorite newspapers representing 41.7% percent, while thirty-five said no representing 58.3% from the total respondents.

Q7. How do you find reading newspaper?

A: Twenty-four respondents find reading newspapers interesting which represents 40%. While fifteen respondents do read newspaper not interesting which is represent 25% percent, and those who find reading newspapers very interesting were twenty-one representing 35% percent from the total respondents.

Q8. Do you consider reading newspaper as a part of education?

A: Thirty-eight respondents representing 63.3% considered newspapers as part of education. While nine said no reading newspapers is not part of education and thirteen representing 21.7% decides not answer the questions.

Q9. Do you agree that newspaper contains some element of education?

A: 45 respondents representing 75% percent, agree that newspapers contained some educational element. While 10 representing 16.7% disagree with the above statement and five remain silent on the question.

Q10. Do you agree that reading newspaper enhance reading ability?

A: 35 respondents representing 58.3% percent agreed that, reading newspapers enhances reading ability. While on the other hand 15 respondents representing 25% percent said



reading newspapers does not enhance reading ability and 10 Respondents representing 16.7% remain silent. Therefore in consideration to the above data presented that, majority of the students agreed that reading newspapers enhances reading ability.

Q11. Do you come across any problem so far, in connection with newspaper reading?

A: 40 respondents representing 66.7% of the total respondents do not encounter any problem while reading newspaper, while 14 respondents representing 23.3% do encounter some problem while reading newspaper and 6 respondents representing 10% did not respond about the question. To address the question, hence, we can deduce that, majority of the students do not encounter any problem while reading newspaper.

Q12. Why do you think some students find it difficult to read newspaper?

A: Thirty respondents representing 50% of the total respondents explained that some students find it difficult to read newspapers because they have lack of interest in reading it. While seventeen respondents representing 28.3% percent explained that some students were lazy to read newspaper. While 13 respondents representing 21.7% were saying, it is a financial stress that hinders many students from reading newspapers.

As you see on the text above, in spite of not every student reads a newspaper, most of them agree that it contains educational elements. It means they consider a newspaper as a part of education. In conclusion, it is revealed the influence of newspaper in enhancing reading ability of students.

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