

WHAT IS MORE ESSENTIAL IN READING: FLUENCY OR COMPREHENSION?

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Pandemic brought a lot of negative impacts to everyone, especially in the learning situation where all schools have closed because of the threat of COVID 19. As an aftermath of this unexpected situation, students have faced anxiety, fear, and remote learning hurdles especially on enhancing their macro skills more specifically, in reading. Furthermore, the issue on reading does not only emerge in the time of COVID, as a matter of fact, this was a long overdue topic way before, as Philippines has scored lowest in reading in 2018 as reflected on the scores provided by the Program for International Student Assessment (PISA).

However, the issue does not solely revolve on reading perse. The recurring debate continues in what should be given more attention and emphasis on these two key skills. Fluency and comprehension are related, yet they are not identical.

As defined by Vilger (2008), fluency is the reading of the readers in an appropriate speed and accurate manner with his/ her natural voice. On the other hand, Veeravagu, et al (2010) stated that, “ Reading comprehension is a thinking process by which a reader selects facts, information, or ideas from printed materials; elicits the meanings the writer intended to convey; provide connections to prior schema and evaluate their suitability and value for achieving the learner’s personal objectives.” For instance, a student can be able to read long texts or passages fluently, but they cannot understand the meaning conveyed in the texts and find it difficult to answer the comprehension questions. According to Rasinski, 2004, “ Reading fluency is the ability to decode and comprehend text simultaneously, thus, reading fluency forms a bridge from decoding skills to

comprehension.” In other words, the scenario not only highlights the differences between comprehension and fluency, but also shows the interrelatedness of each skill to one another, as one should master how to decode words, read fluently, and expand his or her vocabularies to be able to develop his or her reading comprehension as well. Despite this, some students who find it hard to read will intentionally concentrate more on the mechanics of reading and ignores comprehending what they are reading and vice versa. Students should give utmost relevance on both reading fluency and reading comprehension.

To put it briefly, the aims of reading are to gain information, to learn and to be entertained. Both fluency and comprehension are important to enhance one’s reading skills. There are a lot of ways on how to be effective on both key skills which students must acquire. Constant practice of reading while comprehending a certain text or passage really do help in becoming an efficient reader.

References:

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