# ENHANCING THE STUDY READING SKILLS OF DISTANCE EDUCATION STUDENTS - STRATEGIES FOR DESIGNING COURSE MATERIAL

by

ANNA JOHANNA HUGO (née WEITZ)

submitted in accordance with the requirements
for the degree of

DOCTOR OF EDUCATION

in the subject

DIDACTICS

at the

UNIVERSITY OF SOUTH AFRICA

PROMOTER: DR HvR VAN DER HORST
JOINT PROMOTER: DR MM NIEMAN

JUNE 1999

## SUMMARY

This thesis offers an attempt to address the problem of enhancing the study reading skills of distance education students who study at tertiary level. Distance education students should have well-developed study reading skills and strategies, because reading is the main mode through which distance education students study. It is a matter of great concern among lecturers that many students who study at tertiary level, lack the necessary study reading abilities to make a success of their studies. To add to this problem, many students in South Africa study through the medium of English which is their second or even their third language. The issue dealt with in this study centres around the problem which distance education lecturers face to teach appropriate study reading strategies to their students.

The dialectic methodology of analysis and synthesis was employed in a literature study, with a view to developing a model which could serve as a framework for lecturers when designing and writing tutorial matter.

After an introductory orientation (**Chapter 1**), the heterogeneity of the distance education student population is discussed (**Chapter 2**). It is indicated that each distance education student is a unique person with unique personality traits and unique abilities and preferences, such as a personal learning style, personal learning experiences and a personal approach to learning. It is also highlighted that each distance education student lives in an own multidimensional environment.

An analysis of some prevailing reading theories and reading models which underlie study reading is conducted (**Chapter 3**), leading to an investigation of essential aspects involved in study reading such as metacognition, comprehension, decoding and purposes for reading.

In **Chapter 4** the relationship between distance education, technology which involves computers, and reading is investigated. Problems involving reading subject content are discussed. This includes the importance of reading comprehension, the importance of metacognition in the reading process, the importance of affective factors and study

reading. The following elements which distance education lecturers could use to disclose subject content to their students are discussed: reading strategies, comprehension instruction, instructing metacognition, setting purposes and goals for reading, the use of access structures, addressing language related variables and enhancing motivation and interest.

The final chapter comprises an exposition of the conclusions of the investigation, as well as the implications of these conclusions. The thesis concludes with recommendations for the enhancement of study reading skills of distance education students, which could form part of these students' tutorial matter.

## OPSOMMING

In hierdie tesis is daar gepoog om die probleem rakende die studieleesvaardighede van afstandsoderrigstudente wat op tersiêre vlak studeer aan te spreek. Afstandsonderrigstudente behoort goed ontwikkelde studieleesvaardighede en -strategieë te hê omdat lees die vernaamste wyse is waarop sodanige studente studeer. Dosente is egter bekommerd oor die feit dat baie studente wat op tersiêre vlak studeer, nie oor die nodige studieleesvaardighede beskik om 'n sukses van hulle studies te maak nie. Die probleem word verder vererger deurdat baie studente deur medium van Engels, wat hulle tweede of derde taal is, studeer.

Die dialektiese metode wat uit analise en sintese bestaan, is in 'n literatuurstudie gebruik met die oog daarop om 'n model te ontwikkel wat as raamwerk vir dosente kan dien wanneer onderrigmateriaal ontwerp en geskryf word.

Na 'n inleidende oriëntasie (**Hoofstuk 1**), is die heterogeniteit van afstandsonderrig-studente bespreek (**Hoofstuk 2**). Daar is aangedui dat elke afstandsonderrigstudent 'n unieke persoon is met unieke persoonlikheidskenmerke en unieke vermoëns en voorkeure, soos 'n persoonlike leerstyl, persoonlike leerervarings en 'n persoonlike benadering tot leer. Dit is ook uitgelig dat elke afstandsonderrigstudent in 'n eie multidimensionle omgewing leef.

Die leesteorieë en leesmodelle wat onderliggend aan studielees is, is bepreek en geanaliseer (**Hoofstuk 3**). Dit het gelei tot 'n ondersoek van belangrike aspekte wat betrokke is by studielees, naamlik metakognisie, begrip, dekodering en doel waarom gelees word.

In **Hoofstuk 4** is die verband tussen afstandsonderrig, tegnologie wat rekenaars insluit en lees ondersoek. Leesprobleme wat verband hou met die vakinhoudelike is aangespreek, asook die belangrikheid van leesbegrip en metakognisie in die leesproses, terwyl die belangrike rol van affektiewe faktore en studielees aangetoon is. Die volgende aspekte wat afstandsoderrigdosente kan gebruik om vakinhoud vir hulle studente te ontsluit, is bespreek: leesstrategieë, die onderrig van begrip, die

onderrig van metakognisie, doel en doelwitte vir lees, die gebruik van toegangstrukture, leesveranderlikes wat met taal te doen het en die uitbouing van motivering en belangstelling.

Die finale hoofstuk bestaan uit 'n uiteensetting van die gevolgtrekkings van die ondersoek, asook die implikasies van hierdie gevolgtrekkings. Die tesis is afgesluit met aanbevelings vir die bevordering van studieleesvaardighede van afstandsonderrig-studente. Hierdie aanbevelings kan deel uitmaak van hierdie studente se studiemateriaal.

My heartfelt thanks to:

My promoter, Dr Helen van der Horst and my joint promoter, Dr Marietha Nieman for their expert guidance and encouragement.

Prof Richard Lemmer for editing this thesis.

Mrs Marina Botha for her assistance with the layout of the thesis.

All my relatives, friends and colleagues for their support.

Ursula, for constant support.

The University of South Africa for the privilege to use its support services.

To God, all the glory.

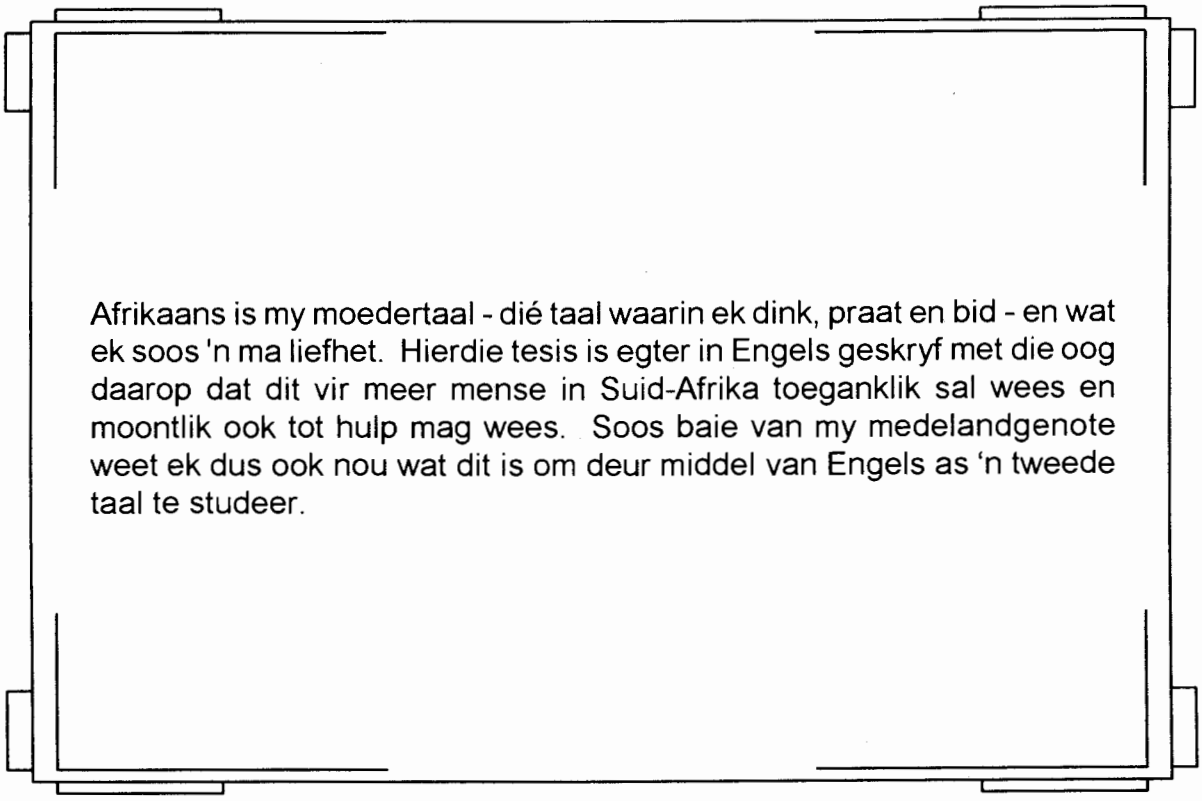
Dedicated to:

My beloved Pierré, Hester and Paul



... being literate goes beyond having *literacy skills* that enable one to disconnect from the interpretation or production of a text as a whole, discrete elements, such as letters, graphemes, words, grammar rules, main ideas, and topic sentences. The sense of being literate derives from the ability to exhibit *literate behaviors*. Through these, individuals can compare, sequence, argue with, interpret, and create extended chunks of spoken and written language in response to a written text in which communication, reflection, and interpretation are grounded.

Shirley B Heath (1991)


Afrikaans is my moedertaal - dié taal waarin ek dink, praat en bid - en wat ek soos 'n ma liefhet. Hierdie tesis is egter in Engels geskryf met die oog daarop dat dit vir meer mense in Suid-Afrika toeganklik sal wees en moontlik ook tot hulp mag wees. Soos baie van my medelandgenote weet ek dus ook nou wat dit is om deur middel van Engels as 'n tweede taal te studeer.

**CHAPTER 1**

**STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM AND METHOD OF INVESTIGATION . . . . . 1**


1.1 INTRODUCTION . . . . . 1

1.1.1 Language related issues and subsequent reading problems . . . . . 3

1.1.2 The growth in distance education . . . . . 8

1.2 STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM . . . . . 11

1.2.1 Background to the problem . . . . . 11

1.2.2 Formulation of the problem . . . . . 14

1.3 AIM OF THE STUDY . . . . . 16

1.4 CLARIFICATION OF CONCEPTS . . . . . 16

1.5 LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY . . . . . 18

1.6 METHOD OF INVESTIGATION . . . . . 18

1.7 PLAN OF STUDY . . . . . 19

**CHAPTER 2**

**A PROFILE OF THE DISTANCE EDUCATION STUDENT** ..... **21**


2.1 INTRODUCTION ..... 21

2.2 GENERAL PERSONALITY CHARACTERISTICS OF THE DISTANCE EDUCATION STUDENT ..... 23

2.3 INIDIVIDUAL DIFFERENCES ..... 25

2.4 THE COGNITIVE DOMAIN ..... 26

2.4.1 Learning ..... 26

2.4.2 Information-processing ..... 31

2.4.3 Field-dependent and field-independent learning ..... 32

2.4.4 Learning style ..... 34

2.4.5 Learning strategies ..... 38

2.4.6 Learning experience ..... 40

2.4.7 Approach to learning ..... 42

2.4.8 Metacognition ..... 46

2.5 INFLUENCE OF STUDENT'S ENVIRONMENT ..... 49

2.5.1 Physical and personal environment ..... 49

2.5.2 Non-physical and academic environment ..... 51

2.6 THE AFFECTIVE DOMAIN ..... 53

2.6.1 Motivation ..... 53

2.6.2 Interest ..... 59

2.7 PHASES OF LIFE ..... 60

2.8 LANGUAGE PROFICIENCY ..... 61

2.9 SYNTHESIS ..... 63

**CHAPTER 3**

**THE PHENOMENON OF READING AND STUDY READING . . . . . 65**


3.1 INTRODUCTION . . . . . 65

3.2 READING DEFINED, READING THEORIES AND READING MODELS . 66

3.2.1 Introduction: Defining key concepts . . . . . 66

3.2.1.1 Reading . . . . . 66

3.2.1.2 Studying . . . . . 67

3.2.1.3 Study reading . . . . . 67

3.2.1.4 Reading theories and reading models . . . . . 68

3.2.2 The bottom-up and top-down models of reading . . . . . 69

3.2.2.1 Instructional implications of the bottom-up and top-down models of reading . . . . . 72

3.2.3 The substrata-factor theory of reading . . . . . 73

3.2.3.1 Instructional implications of the substrata-factor theory of reading . . . . . 74

3.2.4 The information processing model of reading . . . . . 74

3.2.4.1 Instructional implications of the information processing model of reading . . . . . 75

3.2.5 The interactive model of reading . . . . . 76

3.2.5.1 Instructional implications of the interactive model of reading . . . . . 79

3.2.6 The interactive-compensatory model of reading . . . . . 80

3.2.6.1 Instructional implications of the interactive-compensatory model of reading . . . . . 81

3.2.7 The inferential model of reading . . . . . 82

3.2.7.1 Instructional implications of the inferential model of reading . . . . . 83

3.2.8 The affective model of reading . . . . . 84

3.2.8.1 Instructional implications of the affective model of reading. 86

3.3 STUDY READING . . . . . 87

3.4 ESSENTIAL ASPECTS INVOLVED IN STUDY READING . . . . . 89
3.4.1 Introduction . . . . . 89
3.4.2 Reading and metacognition . . . . . 89
3.4.2.1 Instructional implications of reading and metacognition . . . 90
3.4.3 Reading and comprehension . . . . . 91
3.4.3.1 Instructional implications of reading and comprehension . . 94
3.4.4 Decoding and comprehension . . . . . 94
3.4.4.1 Instructional implications of decoding and comprehension . 96
3.4.5 Purposes for reading . . . . . 96
3.4.5.1 Instructional implications of purposes for reading . . . . . 99
3.5 READING AND STUDYING IN ENGLISH AS A SECOND LANGUAGE . 99
3.5.1 Instructional implications of reading and studying in English as second language . . . . . 105
3.6 SYNTHESIS . . . . . 106

**CHAPTER 4**

**DISCLOSURE OF SUBJECT CONTENT TO DISTANCE EDUCATION STUDENTS: READING AND THE ROLE OF LECTURERS** . . . . . **108**


4.1 INTRODUCTION . . . . . 108

4.2 ADULT LEARNING, COURSE DESIGN AND TEXT DESIGN . . . . . 110

4.2.1 Introduction . . . . . 110

4.2.2 Distance education: adult learning and study reading . . . . . 110

4.2.3 Distance education: course and text design . . . . . 114

4.2.4 Distance education: lecturers as persons . . . . . 116

4.3 DISTANCE EDUCATION, TECHNOLOGY AND COMPUTERS . . . . . 119

4.3.1 Introduction . . . . . 119

4.3.2 Computers and interactive communication . . . . . 123

4.3.3 Reading and computers . . . . . 125

4.4 READING IN THE SUBJECT CONTENT AREAS . . . . . 125

4.4.1 Introduction . . . . . 125

4.4.2 Problems experienced by students when reading academic content . . . . . 126

4.4.3 Content-based reading in the subject content with reference to ESL students . . . . . 130

4.4.4 Assessment and ESL students' reading . . . . . 132

4.5 THE IMPORTANCE OF READING COMPREHENSION . . . . . 134

4.6 THE IMPORTANCE OF METACOGNITION IN THE READING PROCESS . . . . . 135

4.7 THE IMPORTANCE OF AFFECT IN THE READING PROCESS . . . . . 136

4.8 DISTANCE EDUCATION LECTURERS AND STUDENT STUDY READING . . . . . 138
4.8.1 Introduction . . . . . 138
4.8.2 Instructing reading strategies . . . . . 140
4.8.3 Comprehension instruction . . . . . 144
4.8.4 Instructing metacognition . . . . . 164
4.8.5 Helping students to set purposes and goals (desired outcomes) for reading . . . . . 173
4.8.6 Using access structures to facilitate understanding of the text and study reading . . . . . 176
4.8.7 Addressing language related variables and problems in reading . . . . . 180
4.8.8 Enhancing students' motivation and interest . . . . . 189

4.9 SYNTHESIS . . . . . 192

**CHAPTER 5**

**CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS . . . . . 195**

5.1 SUMMARY . . . . . 195

5.1.1 Background to the problem . . . . . 195

5.1.2 The problem . . . . . 196

5.1.3 The investigation . . . . . 197

5.2 CONCLUSION . . . . . 199

5.2.1 Students' and lecturers' awareness and knowledge of appropriate study reading skills and study reading strategies . . . . . 199

5.2.2 The personal details of distance education students . . . . . 200

5.2.3 Knowledge of the theoretical framework underlying study reading . . . . . 200

5.2.4 The importance of the ways in which subject content is disclosed to distance education students . . . . . 200

5.3 RECOMMENDATIONS AND IMPLICATIONS OF THE RECOMMENDATIONS . . . . . 203

5.3.1 Recommendations and implications of the recommendations concerning students' knowledge of study reading strategies . . . . . 203

5.3.2 Recommendations and implications of the recommendations for instructional purposes . . . . . 204

5.3.3 Recommendations and implications of the recommendations concerning course material in distance education . . . . . 208

5.3.4 Recommendations and implications of the recommendations concerning modes of assessment and student reading . . . . . 208

5.3.5 Recommendation and implications of the recommendations concerning affective support for distance education students . . . . . 209

5.4 FUTURE RESEARCH . . . . . 209

5.5 CONCLUDING REMARKS . . . . . 210

**BIBLIOGRAPHY . . . . . 211**

**FIGURES . . . . .**

Figure 1 . . . . . 10
Figure 3.1 . . . . . 71
Figure 3.2 . . . . . 78
Figure 3.3 . . . . . 85
Figure 3.4 . . . . . 102
Figure 3.5 . . . . . 104
Figure 4.1 . . . . . 145
Figure 4.2 . . . . . 147
Figure 4.3 . . . . . 155
Fugure 4.4 . . . . . 156
Figure 4.5 . . . . . 159
Figure 4.6 . . . . . 160
Figure 4.7 . . . . . 161
Figure 4.8 . . . . . 162
Figure 4.9 . . . . . 163
Figure 4.10 . . . . . 164
Figure 5 . . . . . 198

**EXHIBITS** . . . . . .

Exhibit 1 . . . . . 142
Exhibit 2 . . . . . 142
Exhibit 3 . . . . . 149
Exhibit 4 . . . . . 150
Exhibit 5 . . . . . 157
Exhibit 6 . . . . . 167
Exhibit 7 . . . . . 170
Exhibit 8 . . . . . 175
Exhibit 9 . . . . . 182
Exhibit 10 . . . . . 185
Exhibit 11 . . . . . 186
Exhibit 12 . . . . . 189

**ADDENDUM A.** . . . . . **239**

**ADDENDUM B.** . . . . . **246**

**ADDENDUM C.** . . . . . **261**

# CHAPTER 1

# STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM AND METHOD OF INVESTIGATION

## 1.1 INTRODUCTION

When one considers the geographical expanse and complexity of South Africa as a developing country, as well as the rapid growth of its population, one immediately realises that a multitude of problems could exist with regard to the provision of adequate basic education to its citizens.

*Basic education* is a term which should include the essential elements of the school curriculum, such as fundamental subjects: reading, writing, mathematics, science, foreign languages and geography. These fields of study serve as vehicles for the transmission of knowledge. Barrow and Milburn (1990:34) endorse this viewpoint when they state that *basic education* refers to those essentials in learning, which every student should possess, or essentials on which many other subjects or areas of study depend (Dejnozka and Kapel, 1991:60). According to Delors (1996:118) '[b]asic education for children can be defined as an initial education (formal or non-formal) extending in principle from around the age of 3 to at least age 12. Basic education is an indispensable passport to life that will enable people to choose what they do, to share in building the collective future and to continue to learn... Education is a human right and an essential for achieving the goals of equality, development and peace ... '

In South Africa many learners lack *basic education* because of a lack of infrastructure such as inadequate school buildings, information centres and laboratories. Furthermore, a lack of well trained teachers, large classes, linguistic problems which have developed as a result of the policy in Department of Education and Training schools to teach learners from grade three in English as the medium of instruction have all contributed to the poor level of basic education of many learners. If a proper

foundation of *basic education is not laid,* it follows that many South African students would have enormous study problems, when they enter secondary or higher education.

Quite often basic learning in South Africa is not in line with the definition produced at the 1990 World Conference on Education for All (Jomtien, Thailand) :

> These needs comprise both essential learning tools (such as literacy, oral expression, numeracy, and problem solving) and the basic learning content (such as knowledge, skills, values, and attitudes) required by human beings to be able to survive, to develop their full capacities, to live and work in dignity, to participate fully in development, to improve the quality of their lives, to make informed decisions, and to continue learning (Delors, 1996:25).

The disparity which existed between learners of different races for many years in the South African education system, has contributed to the intensification of the problems in education. One result is that many matriculants still leave school without appropriate basic education. Griesel and Bradbury (1994:323) point out that:

> Given the reality of disparate schooling systems operating in South African society, universities and post-secondary institutions have been compelled to confront the consequences of unequal access to quality schooling and the related imbalance in the success rates of a changing student constituency.

The changes in the South African education system, envisaged in *Curriculum 2005*, are aimed at elevating the true skills and learning levels of South African learners, in order to multiply the number of South Africans who would eventually obtain marketable skills (*Building a brighter future Curriculum 2005*, 1997:4). For many years there will, however, still be students at tertiary level, who will lack quality schooling and their needs will have to be addressed.

Providing educational support for those students who lack quality schooling, is a challenge which tertiary institutions in South Africa currently face, and will still face in

by a variety of variables, such as the nature of the subject; the level of difficulty of the subject; the demands made by the course; the language competency of the students; the students' experience, and their cognitive abilities. It is estimated that the need for student support at all institutions in South Africa will increase markedly over the next five years (Fraser and Nieman, 1995:120).

### 1.1.1 Language related issues and subsequent reading problems

One aspect which recurs as a problem in the South African education system is the lack of adequate language proficiency in the medium of instruction of learners at school level and students at tertiary level. Most of the secondary schools, serving speakers of African languages, have over many years used English as the medium of instruction. Nowadays, learners at school may be educated in the language of their choice when feasible, but the matriculation examinations are still conducted only in English or Afrikaans. The majority of learners still opt to study through the medium of English, as English is regarded as the language of advancement in the workplace (Gaganakis, 1992:51). A consequence of this is that the majority of learners in South African secondary schools are not taught through the medium of their first language, but through the medium of English as a second or even a third language. Since most of the teachers are not first-language English speakers, but quite often speakers with a limited proficiency in English, this results in the learners not becoming proficient in basic skills of the English language, such as reading and studying by means of English. This is endorsed by McKenna and MacLarty (1987:46):

> However, the fluency needed to grasp content area reading assignments in English is reached by relatively few pupils. Research by the faculty of education at the University of Zululand has revealed that teachers faced with pupils who have difficulty understanding English frequently resort to using Zulu.

The fact that there is a notion to increase the average mark in English of matriculants who are not studying through their home language, with five percent, could also influence the eventual profile of English language abilities of South African students.

The following list comprising the variety of ethnic groups composing the South African population, provides an indication of what percentage of the population actually uses English as a second language for educational purposes and further training. According to the *Provincial Statistics* of the Central Statistical Service (1994) only 9,2 per cent of the South African population speaks English as their home language. The distribution of home languages in South Africa is as follows:

| | |
|---|---|
| Afrikaans | 15,1% |
| English | 9,2% |
| isiNdebele | 1,5% |
| isiSwati | 2,6% |
| isiXhosa | 17,5% |
| isiZulu | 22,4% |
| Sepedi | 9,8% |
| Sesotho | 6,9% |
| Setswana | 7,2% |
| Tshivenda | 1,7% |
| Xitsonga | 4,2% |
| Other languages | 1,9% |

This implies that 73,8 per cent of the population are not English or Afrikaans speakers, and they receive secondary or tertiary education through the medium of a language other than their first language. When they leave school and embark on studying at a tertiary institution, many learners thus experience problems as far as their language, reading and study reading skills are concerned. It remains an open question whether these students will ever be able to unlock their academic potential to the full.

The seriousness of the problem was indicated in a research project which was conducted by the Student Services Bureau of the University of the Orange Free State. In this project the reading level of sixty first-year students were tested. None of the students had a reading level above grade 8, and thirteen of them were only able to read at grade 1 and grade 2 level. These students were, however, enrolled for courses in which they were expected to participate in education at a level where one would expect learners to have passed English Higher Grade at grade 12 level and be proficient in English so as to be able to read academic content at university level (Orr, 1997:51).

After having conducted English language screening tests for first-year students at the University of Durban-Westville, Court (1989:57) came to the conclusion that: 'In the marking and administration of the test scripts I gained the impression that the Black students were faring particularly poorly ...' She (1989:59-60) further stresses that these tests should not be used to indicate academic potential:

> Certainly, though it would seem clear that the Senior Certificate examination and languages tests such as the Screening Test do little more than provide a record of past learning and knowledge, and where the educational environment has been impoverished, they are inadequate and misleading indicators of academic potential.

Students' lack of fluency in English could often be traced back to their teachers' inadequate command of English. Ardington (1992:39) underscores this viewpoint:

> It is in the rural areas where the teachers are not fluent in English, where they lack qualifications, where there are no libraries or resource centres, that there is the greatest need for distance teaching to assist the teachers and yet very few rural schools are electrified or have the necessary funds to buy the equipment required to access distance learning.

The importance of language proficiency for teachers is abundantly clear from the *Norms and Standards for Teacher Education, Training and Development Discussion*

*Document* (Department of Education, 1997a:84-88). In this document the following compulsory outcomes are included in the teacher training for all phases. The core outcomes are spelt out in four clusters or *areas of learning*: *Communications, Life Orientations* (including life orientations, health, environmental and cultural awareness), *Literacies* (including mathematical, scientific, technological, information literacies in textual, visual, oral and aural modes) and *Teaching Studies* (academic outcomes and occupational outcomes). When reading through the subsections in *Communications* one realises the importance of language proficiency:

Learners [teachers] will demonstrate the ability to:

- Understand and use the vocabulary, syntax and conventions of the language of instruction in order to discuss, explain, argue, describe, debate, etc.
- Effectively read and write the language of instruction for personal and academic purposes.
- Write essays clearly, coherently and in an appropriate style.
- Make effective use of language in a classroom context using vocabulary and syntax appropriate to the stage of language development of the learners.
- Understand and apply the principles of language across the curriculum.
- Understand the principles of language acquisition, with appreciation of the needs and abilities of the learner.
- Reflect on and apply knowledge of sociolinguistic issues to specific contexts, with particular emphasis on multilingual and multicultural environments.
- Develop oral, reading and writing strategies in another South African language.
- Understand and apply the principles of second/foreign language acquisition.

As early as 1983, Raubenheimer (1983:9) pointed out that many students, and therefore not only those studying through the medium of English as a second or third language, experienced reading problems. With the growing student population, the demands for the improvement of students' reading abilities at university level in South Africa have increased even more over the present decade. There is a growing realisation amongst teaching staff that many potentially successful students do not

have the necessary reading abilities, and therefore studying abilities, to ensure academic success.

In order to overcome the existing language deficiency which many students on the tertiary level experience, it was stated in the *Discussion document: A policy framework for education and training* (African National Congress (ANC), 1994:65) that provision should be made for language support services '... for students whose prior educational experience had not prepared them adequately in the language or languages of learning.' *This implies that all forms of higher education, including distance education, should develop and implement language support services.*

In order to address the problems in education in South Africa many inputs are required. Many plans and initiatives have recently been launched to solve the education problems, and to address the demands made on the South African education system. Distance education as a means to this end, has been mentioned by many institutions including the Department of Education as a possible solution to the needs on tertiary level. In *A framework for the transformation of further education and training in South Africa* (Department of Education, 1997b:43) it is stated that: 'The possibilities of distance education should be fully utilised, and there should be increasing distance education in the FET* phase. Distance education should not be seen as a second-best option'.
[*FET - Further Education and Training]

The trend that more and more students are turning to distance education as a means to improve their academic qualifications and position in life, will be discussed in the next section. Distance education indeed offers opportunities to people who otherwise would not have any access to further studies.

### 1.1.2 The growth in distance education

The increase in distance education appears to be a worldwide trend. In 1993 the Canadian Council of Ministers of Education noted that:

> Canada's 69 universities have increased their distance education activity level by 50 percent over an eight-year period.... Post-secondary institutions in Canada operate hundreds of technology-based distance education and open learning programs ... technologies are used in a wide range of applications, from Adult Basic Education to graduate courses in physics and chemistry (Boak, Kompf and Boak, 1994:5).

In Britain, Thorpe (1994:2) similarly reports that the circumstances for teaching in higher education have changed radically and permanently as government now promotes open and distance learning as central to higher education, training and the preparation of a more highly skilled workforce.

According to the *Teaching renewal strategy* of the former Department of National Education (Department of National Education,1992:9), people in South Africa who do not have access to contact teaching can be reached by means of distance education. This is especially applicable in the cases of senior secondary school phase (FET phase) and further teaching and training.

In the *Discussion document: A policy framework for education and training* of the ANC ANC,1994:113-115) the importance of a high quality national system of Higher Education is stressed. To enable a larger proportion of the population to study further, provision should be made for distance education. Thus they delineate that: 'Part-time studies and distance education will be provided both through specialised institutions and existing institutions in Higher Education.'

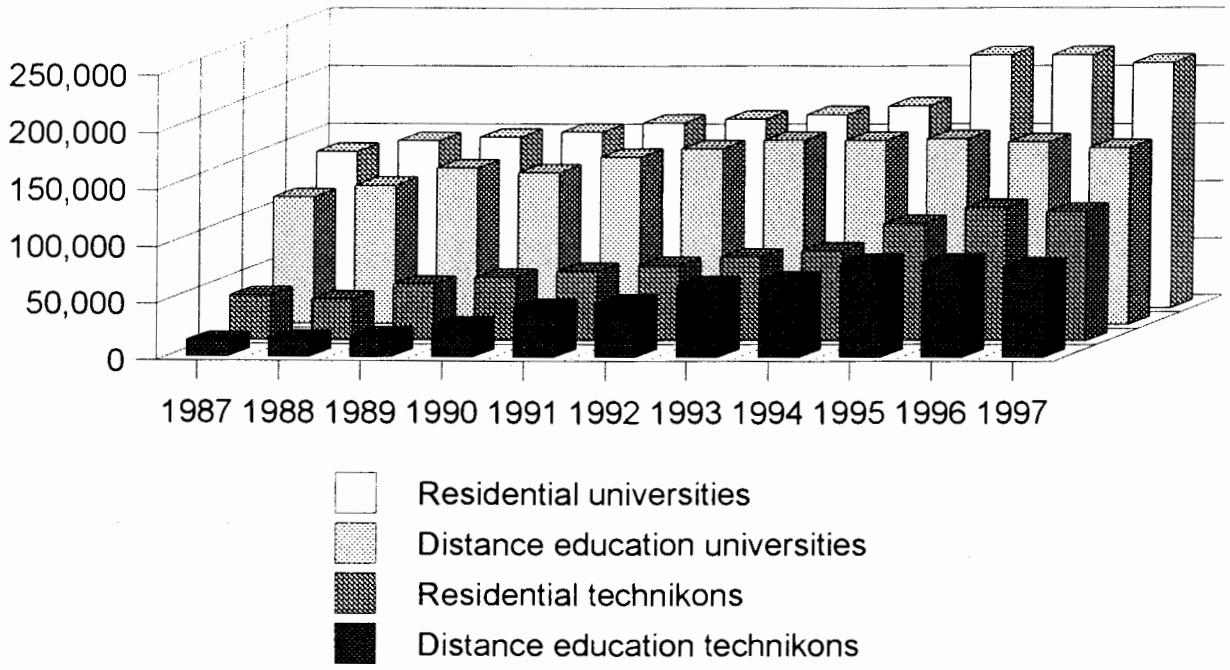
Greyling (1991:1) stresses the indispensability of distance education as follows:

> Distance teaching, in a symbiotic relationship with communication and information technology can offer a possible solution, especially for tertiary and professional training. No other form of education will be possible in a country where the student population is so widely spread, where such disparity in school leaving standards exists, where school leavers increase so rapidly, where technological changes take place at such a tremendous pace, and where a cost-effective education system is of utmost importance.

The increase in the numbers of students enrolled at the residential and distance education institutions (universities and technikons) in South Africa, provides an indication of the need for tertiary education and training which exists (Department of National Education,1994. *Preliminary Education Statistics for 1987-1994*; Department of Education, 1998b. *Number of enrolled University/ Technikon students for 1995-1997*). The increase in distance education students is especially noteworthy. Technikon South Africa is the only distance education technikon in South Africa and the University of South Africa and Vista University are the two main distance education universities. Traditional residential universities, for example the Universities of Pretoria and Stellenbosch, have recently embraced distance learning (telematic learning) as an effective learning mode, complementing face-to-face instruction.

## Figure 1

## Numbers of students enrolled at South African residential and distance education institutions 1987 - 1995




In the period of the ten years between 1987 and 1997, the increase in students at the one distance education technikon was 69 519 and at the two distance education universities 51 037. In the same period the student increase at all eleven residential technikons put together was 63 189 and the increase at all the 16 residential universities put together was 83 882. This growth in student population (at especially the distance education institutions) provides an indication of the need for further education and training amongst the South African population. The growth in distance education student numbers indicates the important role of distance education in the current South African education system. There could be many reasons for the small decline in distance education numbers in 1997, but among the most logical reasons, is the fact that a number of residential universities have started with distance education in conjunction with their face-to-face instruction more or less at this time. The recent

decline in distance education numbers can also possibly be due to socio-economic problems such as the nationalisation of certain employment sectors.

By means of distance education, some difficulties in the South African education system, for example the remoteness of certain areas in the country, underdeveloped rural areas, access to lifelong learning for all citizens and the growth in learner population, can be addressed. However, the problems related to the language proficiency of students and especially their reading proficiency, call for a *specialised form of distance education*. The main outcome of this thesis is the development of a model by means of which the latter problem areas can be addressed.

## 1.2 STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

### 1.2.1 Background to the problem

Reading is the main mode through which students, including distance education students, study. Griesel and Bradbury (1994:324) accentuate that:

> ... the world of university knowledge is most essentially *textual in character* and hence the ability to engage with the text is not just one skill amongst many, but the *crux of entering academic domain*. Where the learning histories of students are often not deeply literate (in a historical sense) and where their prior schooling may have done little to develop them as readers, it is essential to open up or unravel the nature of this new textual territory which they must enter. [italics - AH]

Because they do not always have the opportunity of face-to-face contact with their lecturers or instructors, distance education students rely even more on their reading abilities, than their residential counterparts . This calls for well-developed reading and study reading skills.

The lack of adequate reading and study reading skills displayed by students at tertiary level, has been a matter of grave concern for tertiary level teaching staff for many years. As far back as 1982, Behr (1982:26) pointed at the problem that many academic and university students are not efficient readers. Research establishes that the lack of *reading ability* presents technical problems of communication which dispose a reader to use inappropriate methods of assimilation (Behr, 1982:26), such as meaningless rote learning.

Studying at a distance often relies to a major extent on reading as the only means of assimilation; therefore this lack in reading ability poses an even greater problem in distance education. To add to the problem, one should remember that many distance education students in South Africa study through the medium of a second or even a third language. All these factors render it extremely difficult for many of these students to develop their academic potential to the full.

As far as the University of South Africa (hence Unisa) is concerned, Heese (1994:332) underscores the acuteness of the reading problem: '[s]tudents ... at the University of South Africa often lack adequate reading skills for tertiary studies. This is a particularly important concern in the context of distance education at an institution which relies primarily on printed media.' [italics - AH]

The current researcher, a lecturer at Unisa (which relies heavily on written course material as the main form of instruction), has noticed over a period of years that many students lack appropriate and adequate study and study reading skills. In interviews conducted with students with study problems, the question is usually posed: 'How do you actually study when you prepare for the examination?' Repeatedly the answer is: 'I read and read again.' No reference is ever made to any *study methods or study reading methods*, nor are important aspects such as *reading with comprehension*, *inferential reading* and *metacognitive awareness ever* identified as means of study.

This viewpoint is verified in an investigation which was conducted amongst students at eight distance education institutions in South Africa, one of the findings of Fraser and

Nieman (1995:97) being that '[i]t seems that the *repetitive reading* of study material until the work is understood as well as *summarising* important facts and principles which have to be mastered are two important learning styles used by a large number of respondents'. [italics - AH]

A study conducted with distance learners at tertiary level by Bergh, Van Wyk, Lemmer, Van der Linde and Van Niekerk (1996:169) likewise found that : 'In conjunction with the survival strategies adopted by the participants, most employed *reading strategies* which were not conducive to a deep approach to learning. Most participants tried to memorise content during their first reading and did not even skim-read to obtain a general overview.'

Tertiary institutions in South Africa, for example the University of Natal and the Witwatersrand University, offer reading courses for students, but for students studying at a distance, face-to- face instruction in such courses is not always possible or viable. Even with the introduction of new technological and instructional devices and the fact that the nature of distance education is changing, it is not possible for all distance education students to attend reading courses. Even if reading skills courses were offered to distance students as separate modules, students would possibly have difficulty in finding the time to study such modules.

The nature of current distance education is changing. This is the result of the rapid development that is taking place in information technology. Irrespective of the form that distance education will take, and of the variety of media that will be incorporated in future, reading will always be an important mode of study. The use of the Internet which is presently becoming a very popular study and research tool, for instance requires well developed reading abilties. Stilwell and Crovo (1998:106) anticipate that in the USA within a few years '... nearly every school in every state will have access to Internet'. Learners of all ages will have to be taught to read and collect data which are available on the Information Highway.

The less a student has access to face-to-face teaching, the more he or she will be dependent on other forms of instruction, including written study material which should be read and studied. Teaching at a distance calls for specialised instructional design and support devices. Quite often staff members do not have the necessary training to be able to teach effectively at a distance.

The only channel by means of which the problem of a lack of appropriate reading and study reading skills amongst distance education students can be addressed, is through that which the students have at hand - their study material. It is, therefore, important that lecturers in distance education should take cognisance of how they design their study material. After having done research on distance education Valcke, Martens, Poelmans and Daal (1993:55) came to the conclusion that the high investment in the design of appropriate and effective written study material is well worth the effort.

### 1.2.2 Formulation of the problem

The problem which this study addresses, focuses on: *the incorporation of study reading strategies in instructional material to enhance the study reading abilities of distance education students.* Thus students will be facilitated to read and study with comprehension and insight. Although study reading skills can be and are sometimes taught to students as part of a general reading skills course, the unique challenges of distance education are not always addressed in these courses. These issues give rise to the subproblems of the study:

- *Distance education students* are a *heterogeneous group* of people. How should provision be made in various forms of instruction that are utilised for the range and complexity of their various differences and needs? Compare **Chapter 2.**

- Studying at a tertiary level distance education institution requires advanced reading skills and especially *study reading skills*. This issue becomes even more important when a student studies through the medium of a second or a third language. To be able to understand the cognitive processes involved in

reading and study reading, one should know the theoretical frameworks on which the phenomena of reading and study reading are based. This could facilitate a person to understand reading, study reading and the prominent elements involved in study reading. Questions that should be answered are: On what theoretical frameworks are reading and study reading based? What does study reading entail, and what are the essential elements of study reading? Compare **Chapter 3**.

- Present-day distance education embraces a variety of communication and information options which can be utilised to present the *subject content and study material* for students. The role that reading plays in the mastering of the study material, especially the written text should, however, always be central. Staff members responsible for designing course material for distance education students, should take cognisance of the complexity of the distance education student population, as well as of the required study reading skills and strategies which are at stake concerning specific course content, thus forming a *synthesis between the needs of distance education students and their study reading skills and strategies by integrating this knowledge into the study material.* How can distance education staff members synthesise the needs of their students and the required study reading skills and strategies of a specific subject into the study material? Compare **Chapter 4**.

- The *influence of motivation and interest*, as well as *other affective factors* should not be forgotten when teaching reading. Affective factors are always present in any learning situation and therefore the affective processes influence the cognitive processes including reading. What can lecturers do in helping students to be affectively stable when studying and reading? Compare **Chapter 4**.

- It is necessary to incorporate the *study reading strategies into the study material of distance education students with a view to enhance their study reading skills.* This problem is addressed by the design of an appropriate instructional model. Compare **Chapters 4 and 5**.

## 1.3 AIM OF THE STUDY

The role of the teaching staff at tertiary and other educational institutions is changing from transmitting knowledge to facilitating learning. This is a world-wide phenomenon. Lecturers thus have to actively take part in fostering student learning by creating learning environments and activities that enhance student learning.

Distance education students rely heavily on written material to understand and study the content, principles and processes of their subjects. They are required to do a great deal of reading. Lecturing staff members at distance education institutions should make adequate provision for the enhancement of their students' reading abilities. Therefore this study *comprises an attempt to provide a synthesis of the required study reading skills and strategies that could be incorporated into the study material of distance education students in order to enhance their study reading abilities* (cf **1.2.2 Formulation of the problem**).

## 1.4 CLARIFICATION OF CONCEPTS

Certain important concepts which recur in the text will be discussed in this section. This discussion serves as a mere introductory clarification of concepts. In the text more detail on the concepts will be provided.

*Distance education*: According to Rowntree (1992:29) '*distance education* ... embraces the hundreds of world-wide schools, colleges and universities who cater for learners studying at a distance ... The learners are separated from their teachers in time and space but still are being guided by them'. There is, however, a worldwide trend to take the 'distance' out of the term 'distance education ' - thus making it difficult to define

what distance education exactly is. In South Africa, for instance, there are many tertiary institutions which are no longer purely residential institutions, since many of the post-secondary institutions have introduced distance education courses alongside their face-to-face classes. In the *Report of the national committee on further education* (1997:42) it is stated that '... the distinctions between distance education and contact learning in further education and training institutions are blurring as more providers consider the incorporation of distance education strategies and resources within their programmes ... Similarly, distance education programmes increasingly use face-to-face learning, often to provide the practical components of courses'.

*Distance teaching course material*: Subject content is arranged in *course material* which is tutorial matter specially designed for learners who learn by means of this material alone. This material should fulfil all the functions of a lecturer such as for instance teaching, guiding, motivating, explaining and reminding (Rowntree, 1990:11). Distance education teaching course material could for instance include prescribed books, study guides, workbooks and tutorial letters.

*Reading*: In this text *reading* will be regarded as an interactive, cognitive and affective process amongst *learner, text and task.* It concerns meaning - both the meaning that the reader brings to the text and the meaning that the reader gets from the text (Armbruster and Heathington, 1988:16). Reading is done with a view of effective study of the text (cf 'study reading' below).

*Skills*: Skills can be intellectual, physical or social and it demonstrates a person's ability to apply his or her knowledge (Rowntree, 1990:46). In the context of this thesis students should have personal reading skills in order to use print as a learning tool. By developing reading strategies, students, eventually develop their own reading skills.

*Strategies*: As far as reading is concerned, *strategies* can be described as conscious and flexible plans a reader applies and adapts to a variety of texts and reading tasks (Dole, Duffy, Roehler and Pearson, 1991:242).

*Students*: In the context of this dissertation *students* are *adult learners* involved in *post-secondary or higher education*, for example technikons and universities.

*Study reading*: *Study reading* is associated with the requirement to perform cognitive and/or procedural tasks that can be identified (Armbruster, Anderson and Ostertag, 1989:136) with a view to effective learning. The process of reading and studying from text is viewed as a criteria-related, self-directed form of reading text and it is contrasted to reading for entertainment for example a novel or a newspaper. It is a form of reading in which specific information must be gained in order to perform well on some future event such as writing examinations in order to demonstrate the achievement of learning outcomes (Anderson, 1979:77).

## 1.5 LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

Although this study comprises a synthesis of the required study reading skills and strategies which should be incorporated into the course material of distance education students, the implementation of the strategies to effectuate the reading skills will be branded only in a general fashion. There will be no attempt to discuss the enhancement of reading skills in all the basic subjects disciplines which can be offered at tertiary level. Only a general profile of the distance education student population will be offered. Further research should be conducted on the particularisation of the findings of this study to particular learning groups and particular learning areas or subjects (cf **Chapter 5** in this regard).

## 1.6 METHOD OF INVESTIGATION

This thesis is an investigation into the problem of how to design a model for study reading skills and strategies which could be incorporated into the course material of distance education students. An intensive *discussion of the theories underlying study reading,* a profile of the distance education student and options for including reading

strategies in study material of distance education students with special reference to written text will be undertaken. These discussions will be conducted by means of a *systematic literature study*.

The discussions (based on analyses of relevant literature) will form the foundation for a synthesis which will be arrived at in the course of the study. The synthesis of information will lead to the design of a model which could serve as a framework when compiling and designing course material for distance education in order to enhance the study reading skills and strategies of students.

## 1.7 PLAN OF STUDY

The following programme will be followed:

- **Chapter 2**

In this chapter a profile of the distance education student will be determined in order to identify the heterogeneity of this student group, with special reference to the South African distance education student.

- **Chapter 3**

Chapter 3 will comprise an investigation into *prevailing reading theories* focusing on study reading and reading by medium of a second language as special fields of investigation.

- **Chapter 4**

This chapter will focus on the ways in which written study material, with reference to *written text*, is made available to distance education students, and the role that reading plays when studying at a distance. The role of lecturing staff members in the support and enhancement of students' study reading will also be included. It will also be indicated that affective factors influence the cognitive processes which include reading. The role of lecturers to motivate students and to support their affective needs when studying and reading, will be discussed.

- **Chapter 5**

Chapter 5 will logically synthesise **Chapters 2, 3** and **4** by matching the profile of distance education students with required study reading skills, as well as with student motivation, and integrating this information into the study material which is made available to distance education students. This synthesis and integration which culminates in the design of a model for the incorporation and enhancement of study reading skills and strategies into the study material of distance education students in general, serves as a foundation for the inferences, implications and recommendations which evolve from this study.

In the next chapter a profile of distance learners is constructed.

# CHAPTER 2

# A PROFILE OF THE DISTANCE EDUCATION STUDENT

## 2.1 INTRODUCTION

The learner is a very important variable in the situation analysis which always precedes any course design. When designing course material for distance education students, lecturers should take cognisance of the learner and especially of the adult learner for whom the course content is designed. There is, for example, a notion that more mature students may require different teaching methods, compared to those students who have entered tertiary institutions straight from school, and provision should be made for this when designing course material.

Contact and distance education have many common features. Certain aspects which are important for successful teaching and learning in a contact situation are, however, difficult to apply by means of distance education. These include the problem that immediate dialogue and immediate feedback are not always possible in a distance education situation. Another valuable possibility in the contact situation is the sharing of ideas and experience. A lack of these cooperative activities may lead to academic isolation which often influences a distance education student's study behaviour and study success.

It is of utmost importance that educators of adults should have a sound knowledge of human developmental theories, in order to have guidelines for the understanding and the anticipation of rhythms of mental, physical and emotional development in adult interests and needs (Hough, 1984:9).

Rowntree (1990:41-43) is of the opinion that it is essential for lecturers to obtain information about students who study at a distance, before they commence with their studies. According to him there are three main ways by means of which to construct a profile of prospective learners:

- One can rely on one's own previous experience of such learners. Otherwise, broadly similar experiences or those of colleagues can be used.
- A lecturer can also meet some of the prospective learners and discuss the aims and objectives of the course and establish what students already know about the course and what their expectations of the course are.
- A profile can be obtained by sending a questionnaire to prospective learners, in order to obtain the information that is needed for successful teaching. If this can be followed up by a discussion with the learners, so much the better.

When enrolling for courses offered at distance education institutions, students are requested to provide personal details. A questionnaire to determine the profile of a distance education student's pre-knowledge, learning style, interests, and approach to learning could also form part of the enrolment requirements. In this way an up to date profile of students entering for a course can be compiled.

In this chapter a profile of the adult learner who studies at a distance will be constructed. The focus will be on those processes which influence the distance education student's study behaviour, as well as those aspects of the student's personal profile which could help him or her to make a success of tertiary studies. Variables that are applicable to both residential and distance education students, will be discussed, but the emphasis will be the distance education student. The cognitive and affective aspects of a student's profile will be discussed in more detail as these aspects are particularly relevant to effective study. The reason for this is that reading (particularly study reading) has strong cognitive and affective dimensions, which are described in **Chapter 3**.

Lecturers should know their students and the personal needs of their students. The important role of instruction towards meeting learners' individual needs is underlined by the following apt quotation:

> In addition, most individual differences are considered to be data and/or resource limitations that can be modified by instruction. Of course, biologically determined differences such as attention, temperament, and maturational stages cannot be modified, but psychological differences such as knowledge, language, memory, organizations, mood, attitudes, cognitive style expectancies, and motivation can be modified. From this point of view, instead of fitting learners into specific methods of instruction, we are learning to adapt instructional methods to learners' individual differences (Morgan, Ponticall and Gordon, 1998:209).

## 2.2 GENERAL PERSONALITY CHARACTERISTICS OF THE DISTANCE EDUCATION STUDENT

In South Africa there is a tremendous need for research to be done about distance education students, especially those who seek to be on-campus. According to Le Roux (1995:155) there is a special need to understand students, who seek to study on-campus.

Residential students are usually persons who study full-time and they receive face-to-face lectures on campus. They are financed by parents, family members, other donors or by companies and they are not employed full-time. Distance education students' needs and life circumstances differ in this regard from residential students and this calls for understanding and special support from the side of lecturers. Compare **Chapters 4** and **5** in this regard.

People become distance education students for a variety of reasons. Distance education serves many needs and it should therefore be understood that distance education students will be a very heterogeneous group of people. It is almost impossible to pinpoint all the characteristics of distance education students, although they generally have the following four characteristics in common:

**Experience**: They are usually adult students in employment.
**Aspirations**: Their family and work come before study.
**Study milieu**: Learning usually takes place off-campus and often at a distance.
**Investment**: The distance education student is often self-financing (Hiola and Moss, 1990:116).

These characteristics influence students' aspirations which in themselves influence students' motivation and interest. (Cf **2.6.1 Motivation** and **2.6.2 Interest** for a discussion of these aspects.)

Knowles (in Burge, 1986:27) perceives another perspective of distance learners which, once again, calls for special insight on the part of those involved in the teaching of these students. He proposes four basic assumptions about the characteristics of adults as learners. These assumptions cast a different light on, especially, the personality development and learning of distance learners:

- As a person matures, his or her self-image moves from a dependent framework to a *self-directing, independent one*.
- A person accumulates *life experience* that in itself can act as a *resource for learning*.
- The readiness to learn, also called the 'teachable moment', is orientated to the developmental *tasks and needs* of a person's various life roles.
- The orientation to learning becomes *problem or task-centred*. A person is concerned with the immediate application of knowledge.

Knowles's view is in line with the tenents of outcomes-based education which views education as problem-centred, task-orientated and the lifelong learner as a responsible, self-directed person. In **2.7 Phases of life** it will be shown that all students will not have reached the same level of development, as chronological age is not a criterion for maturity. It is a fact that students' life experience and developmental needs differ widely.

It is imperative that lecturers should take cognisance of a student's personality, because of the role this plays in each respective student's selection of study methods (Watkins and Hattie, 1981:392).

## 2.3 INIDIVIDUAL DIFFERENCES

Each adult learner is a unique person who for instance uses a unique preferred learning style when studying. This uniqueness should be taken into account; for if not taken into account, it could impair an effective learning process (Crous, 1994:159).

Because each student is a unique person, learning takes place at different pace and in varying ways. Both the comprehension and retention of subject content are influenced by individual differences, such as intellectual ability, level of education, personality, occupation, religion, cultural environment, language preference, age, gender, beliefs, prejudices and motivation (Steyn, 1993:2). When deciding *how* and in *what format* the subject content is to be dealt with in course material for distance education students, special attention should be paid to differences in culture, occupation, personality, physique, age, level of development, experience, intellectual ability, academic progress, motivation and personal circumstances (Adey, Gous, Heese and Le Roux, 1996:41).

Dickerman (1988:263) stresses that there is in fact a need for *individualisation and flexibility* in graduate programmes in adult education. The well-known didactic principle of individualisation should therefore be applied in adult education, including distance education. Many factors indicate this need: significant differences between individual students, the kinds of outcomes which are thought to be suitable for students, the kinds of help which student respondents expressed a need for, the necessity to borrow from other disciplines, the fact that fieldwork is required and is usually done individually. This diversity amongst students influences their learning processes. The cognitive processes, as one of the student's variables, is addressed in the ensuing sections.

## 2.4 THE COGNITIVE DOMAIN

### 2.4.1 Learning

There are different views on what learning entails. Van Rossum and Schenk (1984:74) identify, for instance, five categories of learning. The common feature of the first three is that they are essentially *reproductive*, which means that they represent *a corpus* of segments of knowledge, which the learner should attempt to memorise. These three categories are:

- an increase of knowledge;
- memorising, and
- the acquisition of facts.

The other two categories regard learning as a *constructive* activity. Learning is thus viewed as:

- the abstraction of meaning, and
- an interpretative process aimed at understanding reality.

Our knowledge of student learning is mainly informed by cognitive psychology, as research has indicated that there is a close correspondence between cognitive

psychology and learning, where the latter relates to academic learning. Research on learning and learning theories covers a very wide field. For the purpose of this thesis reference will be made to the most important aspects and information directly applicable to the content of this subsection.

A paradigm shift in cognitive psychology has occurred during the past fifteen to twenty years. According to Biggs (1989:8) the human learner is no longer regarded as a passive information storage system, but as a *self-determining agent*, who actively selects information from his or her environment and the learner constructs new knowledge in the light of what is already known to him or her. The influence of a learner's existing knowledge on reading comprehension will be discussed in **Chapters 3** and **4**.

On the basis of an analysis of interviews with Swedish students, five modes in which students conceptualise academic learning, were reported. The same five modes of learning were also identified from research on the responses by Nepalese students are indicated by Watkins and Regmi (1992:102,106-107). Learning can be:

- an increase in knowledge;
- application;
- understanding;
- perceiving matters in a different way, and
- changing as a person.

It is clear that academic learning may be characterised by a wide spectrum of conceptions. It is also clear that students expect more than mere understanding, the memorisation of facts or the increase in knowledge when they venture into tertiary education. Academic learning should help them to apply what they have learned in concrete situations, and thus they should develop and change as persons.

Academic learning by tertiary students can be characterised as *unique*. Whereas teaching in general can be regarded as being public by nature, adult learning is more *private and individual*. An adult student's personal life experience, unique brain potential, unique lifestyle, particular personality dimensions, interests and unique predispositions, make adult learning *personal and private* (Steyn, 1993:1).

The point of departure for a faculty or teaching department should not be how the faculty or department teaches, but the focus should be on *how students* learn. Teaching staff should include whatever the situation requires to enhance student learning. An effort should be made to understand the activities that are unique to their specific teaching department or faculty, and which have a major impact on student learning. Activities such as direct, individual student/lecturer interaction, intense small group discussions, mentoring, advice to students and encouraging students to be involved in activities that are important for their own learning, should be included. This would include activities such as the following: peer group and team orientated settings, peer tutoring and coaching, and experiential learning outside the institution (Guskin, 1994:20).

There are certain *settings* which will foster student learning. In order to enhance student learning, Guskin (1994:19) suggests that the following should be assimilated in teaching programmes:

- There are key elements of student learning that can only be accomplished effectively, by means of *interaction between students and lecturers*.
- There are key elements of student learning that can be accomplished effectively *by the use of electronic technologies*, especially *new information technologies*.
- There are key elements of student learning that can be accomplished effectively through *peer interaction* without the presence of a lecturer and by *students teaching themselves inside and outside an institution.*

Dickerman (1988:252) postulates that there are factors that can either help or hinder adult learning. These factors may come from the teacher, the learner, the group, the institution or from outside. They may relate to the *content* which is communicated or relate to the *processes* by means of which this is done. Learning skills should for instance form part of the teaching of a subject. By doing so lecturers or instructors can use so-called *infusion* instead of falling back on the outdated and overused expert-special group model. The content that they are lecturing and how they are lecturing it, should be considered by lecturers This will help them to become aware of the intellectual demands that they make and the supporting strategies accompanying these that form part of the learning content (Cloete and Shochet, 1986:254).

As far as students' learning processes are concerned, it was found in research which was conducted in Australia (Watkins and Hattie, 1981:391-392) that the demographic variables such as gender, faculty and age influence *students' learning processes* as follows:

*Gender*: Regardless of faculty, academic year or age, females were more likely than males, to show interest in their courses and to adopt a deep-level approach to their work. It also seemed as if females possessed more organised study methods than male students.

*Faculty*: Regardless of age, gender or academic year, students from faculties of arts were the most likely to show intrinsic interest in their courses and to adopt a deep-level approach to their work. Science students tended to be more motivated by vocational concerns and to adopt a surface-level approach to their studies.

*Age*: Regardless of faculty, gender or academic year, more mature students tended to be less motivated by pragmatic concerns and to be more likely to adopt a deep-level approach to their work.

(The deep-level and surface-level approaches to learning mentioned in the above section, will be discussed in **2.4.7 Approach to learning**.)

Hough (1984:8) refers to age, level of educational attainment and place of residence as the three major demographic variables that are highly relevant for *educational planning for adult learners*. These factors support the argument that the needs and experience-based concepts of andragogy offer useful insights into the learning needs patterns of adults.

In summary, the adult learner's learning can be characterised by:

- reproductive activity;
- self-determination;
- constructive activity;
- unique activity;
- private activity;
- individual activity;
- cooperation between student and lecturer;
- technological activity, and
- self-instruction.

It is obvious that all the demographic variables mentioned above have teaching implications and that lecturers of a tertiary institution, should be familiar with these implications, in order to be able to facilitate effective learning. The idea that more mature students may require different teaching methods compared to those required by students who commence study immediately after their schooling, should for instance be analysed. An analysis of the study reading demands facing students in courses offered by various learning areas should be done. Another analysis that should be conducted is an analysis of the relationship between the learning area and the study methods used by students. Lecturers should consider the results of such situation analyses when designing courses in terms of appropriate teaching strategies and types of assessment.

Burge (1986:26) points out that distance education has democratised access to learning. The question should, however, be asked whether it has in fact democratised any of the processes of learning, or indeed the assessment of learning outcomes. Special attention should be paid to the various processes of learning in order to facilitate students' learning.

### 2.4.2 Information-processing

Cloete and Shochet (1986:248-249) postulate that the main aspect of cognitive psychology relevant to learning at the tertiary level, is information-processing. Information-processing addresses the elaborate set of internal or cognitive processes involved in the acquisition and organisation of knowledge. This emphasis includes a number of salient aspects such as:

- The development of concepts such as '*schemata*' or 'frames' to explain the distorting effects of previous knowledge on the memorisation of new material.
- *Semantic integration*, which deals with how sentences are combined, so that understanding is based on the overall context.
- *Progress* which has been made with the analysis of problem solving behaviour.
- Description of *cognitive strategies* used to modify and regulate internal processing, which in turn is used to solve complex problems and to selectively perceptualise, store and retrieve information.

In the information-processing paradigm cognisance should be taken of *unobservable data* such as students' beliefs and perceptions. This paradigm concentrates on the personal independence of the learners and their ability to become aware of why they are using a particular study technique. Such an approach further examines the underlying processes intrinsic to the acquisition of knowledge (Zolezzi, 1992:11).

Information-processing has thus many implications for teaching and instruction. It encompasses cognitive processes which will be discussed in **2.4.3 Field-dependent and field-independent learning**, **2.4.7 Approach to learning** and **2.4.8 Metacognition**.

### 2.4.3 Field-dependent and field-independent learning

Studies on the field-dependence-independence dimension of cognitive styles have indicated that it has wide applications to learning, and eventually to teaching.

*Field-dependent learners* make greater use of external social referents and are more attentive to social cues than field-independent learners. In interpersonal orientation, field-dependent learners show an interest in others; prefer to be physically close to other people; are emotionally open, and gravitate towards social situations. They have a set of social skills that are less evident than that of their field-independent counterparts (Mrosla, 1989:98). Field-dependent learners have difficulty selecting parts of a task separately from the whole. They tend to view content in a global manner (Doyle and Rutherford, 1984:21).

The following are characteristics of the *cognitive style of a field-independent learner*. A field-independent learner:

- enjoys analysing subject matter;
- stresses details of concepts;
- regards parts to have a meaning on their own, and
- enjoys the discovery approach (Lemmer and Squelch, 1993:61).

*Field-independent learners* have an impersonal orientation, thus showing little interest in others. They prefer non-social situations and show both physical and psychological distancing from people (Mrosla, 1989:98). When it comes to learning, field-

independent learners have greater skills in cognitive analysis and structuring than field-dependent learners. In the learning situation, field-independent learners are able to disembed parts of a task from the existing pattern and devise alternative organisational patterns (Doyle and Rutherford, 1984:21).

The *cognitive style of a field-dependent learner* can be summarised as follows. A field-dependent learner:

- functions well when aims and outcomes are carefully explained or demonstrated before the actual lesson or activity;
- deals well with concepts in humanised form;
- shows a preference for concrete visual images, and
- functions well when curriculum content is made relevant to personal interests and personal experiences (Lemmer and Squelch, 1993:61).

Singh (1988:361) explains that there is a definite relationship between socialisation practices and cognitive styles. One can therefore assume that different life-styles, perceptions, cognitive styles and learning styles will exist in a society that is culturally pluralistic. The composition of the South African society as discussed in **Chapter 1**, is a good example of a culturally pluralistic society and possible differences in cognitive and learning styles should be considered when teaching members from various cultural groups.

Field-dependence-independence has teaching implications. Mrosla (1989:104) indicates that *field-dependent students* will learn more effectively when they have *extra guidance from the lecturer*. *Field-independent learners* will again perform better when allowed to *work independently*. The organisation of most classrooms which is based on the Western model of education, tends to be more suited to field-independent learners. Research has, however, shown that many learners in South Africa are field-dependent. They respond best to a classroom environment which is co-operative, person-orientated and which supports global learning. This viewpoint is acknowledged

by outcomes-based education which states that learners should have the opportunity to become more active participants in the learning process. A more democratic atmosphere in the classroom will be needed to facilitate this. The learner will also be recognised as a unique person with own capabilities and an own background which might differ from others (University of South Africa, 1997c:18).

The teaching style of persons is determined largely by their own learning style approach (cf **2.4.4 Learning style**). Therefore it is necessary for lecturers to recognise their own particular teaching style in order for them to understand how their own teaching style may inadvertently conflict with the learning styles of some of their students (Lemmer and Squelch, 1993:62).

This indeed poses problems to those distance education students who are field-dependent learners but who for practical reasons, have to learn at a distance and therefore independently. It is clear that field-dependence-independence should be considered when designing course material for students and even more so when designing course material for distance education students. In a country such as South Africa with its wide diversity of students, the socio-cultural influence on learning and preferrred learning contexts should always be borne in mind.

### 2.4.4 Learning style

Learning style differs from individual to individual. According to Dunn (1984:12) a learning style is the way in which each person absorbs and retains information and/or skills. Mansfield and Murrell (1991:129) define learning style as the preferred mode for assimilating information and for processing it. According to Watkins and Regmi (1990:175) a person's learning style is a relatively permanent way of learning tasks. The origins of a person's learning style lie in an individual's personality and are independent of the learning context. Cloete and Shochet (1986:249) define learning style as the generally preferred, or predisposed way to learning, which seems rather deterministic and inflexible. Turner (1993:82-84) states that learning style

encompasses the notion that individuals have certain characteristics which result in preferred ways of understanding, interacting with and responding to a learning situation. Learning style also includes visual, auditory, tactile and kinesthetic preferences of individuals.

According to Morgan (1991:1) the aim of research on learning style is to gain insight into *how* and *why students tackle their studies in particular ways*. The findings provide a conceptual framework for understanding a student's learning from the student's own learning perspective.

In an analysis of various publications on learning style, Slabbert (1988:26) came to the following conclusions on what learning style comprises:

- Learning style is unique to an individual.
- Learning style represents the preconceived preferences of a person to the way in which he or she likes to learn.
- Learning style should not be regarded as absolutely fixed and could indirectly be changed or influenced.
- It is only by reflecting on a learning task that a pattern of preferences can be identified. Therefore learning style can only be identified after completion of a task.

If a student prefers the visual mode for taking in information, the on-campus situation in which he or she attends face-to-face lectures, is the best learning situation. Distance education students are, however, forced to use the visual mode of learning for the main part of their studies as they have to read everything they have to study eventhough the visual mode of learning might not always be their personal preferred mode of learning.

*Learning style* has *implications for teaching style*. Fischer and Fischer (1979:251) postulate that learning styles and teaching styles are interrelated. The teaching styles of persons are not only influenced by their own personal learning styles (Lemmer and

Squelch, 1993:62), but also by their their students' learning styles. Knowledge of students' learning styles can thus help secure more effective design of teaching methods and environments. Learning can indeed be enhanced by improving the 'fit' between teaching styles and the learning styles of students (Sims, 1990:19).
For a lecturer to be able to teach within the framework of students' learning styles, an understanding of the range of the students' instructional preferences and the application of approaches and study materials responsive to those needs would be required. Content instruction needs to be integrated with an understanding of students' perceptual abilities, cultural and linguistic backgrounds, and the recognition of the role of the learners in the educational experience (Lippitt, 1991:15).

Students in distance education are more dependent on the course materials than students who participate in face-to-face instructional programmes. This implies among others, that students should be taught by means of methods and media that complement their respective learning styles. This also places an ethical responsibility on those who are responsible for developing and writing course material for distance education (Reed and Sork, 1990:36).

In a research report on distance education in South Africa, Fraser and Nieman (1995:29-30) analysed a vast amount of literature on learning styles and the applicability of learning styles to distance education. The following inferences were drawn:

- The *selection of goals* for a distance education programme or course plays a significant role. One such goal is whether the programme or course is meant to be self-contained, or whether it is meant to supplement learning which takes place in other settings.
- When selecting learners, attention should be given to the degree to which learners of a given learning style should be encouraged or discouraged from enrolling for a course or programme.

- The role and amount of *personal contact* should be taken into consideration. Courses can vary from courses which provide substantial interaction, to courses which depend almost entirely on self-study.
- What direction to follow should be considered, for example one that moves from the global to the analytical, or perhaps inductive and deductive variants within the same programme.
- Certain demographic factors are very important in the planning of courses, for example age, gender and occupation.
- Learners should be helped to increase their versatility. The most successful approaches usually begin with the areas which are the strengths of the learners, and the learners are thereafter encouraged to use strategies which they would not generally prefer.
- More insight into the impact of factors such as personality and style of learning, may help with the prediction of outcomes and the enhancement of success in programmes.

Learning style plays an important role in the reading process of readers. According to Carrell (1992:109) some readers, especially those second language readers who under-utilise prior knowledge in understanding a text, are field-dependent and experience problems to comprehend properly. The use of prior knowledge in understanding a text, is discussed in **3.2.5 The interactive reading model** and in **3.2.8 The inferential model of reading**. As cognitive style may relate to the style of comprehension in reading in the same way in which cognitive style relates to second language style of learning or style of acquisition of knowledge, a reader's reading style may be part of his or her general learning style (field-dependent or independent), and of the processing of any incoming information. The reading text represents an external stimulus with a structure. According to the *interactive reading model*, interactive reading requires that relevant internal knowledge structures be superimposed on the text. Readers who are text-bound when reading may generally tend to be stimulus-bound due to their field-dependence.

To address different learning styles in a uniform tutorial package, poses problems. This can be addressed to a certain extent if tutorial packages are regarded as basic resources which students are invited to use in whatever way they feel appropriate. Thus each student would be able to use the tutorial package in a way that fits in with his or her learning style. The turorial package should thus not prescribe a particular way of student interaction, but should present open opportunities for student learning.

### 2.4.5 Learning strategies

Learning styles refer to the *'how'* of learning, that is the way in which people absorb, process and retain information. Learning strategies refer to the approaches to learning. They refer to the specific ways in which learning tasks are approached in order to gain and process information. Learning strategies could for instance include techniques such as underlining, summarising, concept mapping, paraphrasing and repetition (Fraser and Nieman, 1995:26). These strategies inform and are related to reading strategies which are discussed in **4.8 Distance education lecturers and student study reading**.

According to Derry (1989:4-10) learning strategies are certain mental processing techniques. These processing techniques can be taught, and students can use them to improve the quality of their learning. If learners receive proper learning strategy training during their school years, they will acquire a form of knowledge to be applied in the wide variety of learning situations which they will come across throughout their lives. Derry (1989:6-10) states that learning strategies contain the following elements of specific learning tactics:

- *Verbal learning tactics*, which are tactics for acquiring verbal knowledge to be used in subjects such as science, literature and history.
- *Procedural learning tactics*, which refer to tactics for acquiring procedural skills such as reading, language usage and problem solving.

- *Mental support tactics*, which are support tactics for self-motivation and which are applicable to all types of learning situations.

The following learning strategy recommendations were made with the older adult learner in mind (Hough, 1984:13). Learning:

- should tap some deep interest and need;
- needs to restore confidence in the ability to learn;
- should be non-competitive;
- should provide plenty of opportunity for fellowship, and
- should be accompanied by the opportunity for counselling to assist learners to relate instruction to personal needs.

These recommendations should be considered when designing *course material* for adult students, and even more so when it is for adult distance education students. It will be indicated in section **4.8.8 Enhancing students' motivation and interest** that students' learning could benefit when they have a *purpose driven interest* in the text which they read and study. This is in line with the *deep interest and needs* required by adult learning and provision for interest and needs should thus be incorporated into the tutorial matter of distance education students. More mature students could for instance be helped to restore their confidence in their own learning abilities by among others not being advised to be competitive.

However, a problem lies with distance students' needs for fellowship, contact with others, as well as opportunities for counselling. In South Africa many distance education students appear to prefer to be on-campus. At the University of South Africa more and more students, especially young adults, started flocking to the library during the eighties. The library facilities were used as study units. As a result additional study facilities had to be created in order to accommodate the growing number of fulltime students on-campus (Le Roux, 1995:142-143).

The growing numbers of study centres and tutors such as the Midrand Campus and Boston College, for distance education students in South Africa, is an indication of students' needs for contact, fellowship and counselling and could help to address these needs. Lecturers and other members of staff involved in the design of study material for distance education students, such as lecturers at the University of South Africa should have insight into the social needs of their students such as the need to learn together.

### 2.4.6 Learning experience

An adult learner's *pre-knowledge* and experience as part of his or her frame of reference, influence his or her study behaviour. Life experience is one of the four basic assumptions about the characteristics of adult learners as mentioned by Knowles (Burge, 1986:27).

According to Kolb's Learning Styles Inventory (1984:67-69) learning is a circular process consisting of four adaptive learning modes. *Concrete experience* which focuses on being involved in experiences and dealing with immediate human situations, is followed by *reflective observation*. Reflective observation focuses on understanding the meaning of ideas and situations by carefully observing them. This leads to *abstract conceptualisation* which focuses on using logic, ideas and concepts. It emphasises thinking as opposed to feeling. The fourth learning mode is an orientation toward *active experimentation* which focuses on actively influencing people and changing situations.

Kolb (in Jonassen and Grabowski, 1993:249) identified four main styles of learning, namely divergers, assimilators, convergers and accommodators. The role which experience plays in each learning style is as follows:

For *divergers*, experience is grasped concretely through feelings and transformed through thought. This learning style combines concrete experience with reflective observation.

For *assimilators*, experience is grasped through abstract comprehension and transformed through thought. The characteristics of abstract conceptualisation and reflective observation are combined in this learning style.

Experience, for *convergers*, is grasped through abstract comprehension and transformed through action, which combines abstract conceptualisation and active experimentation.

For *accommodators*, experience is grasped concretely through feelings and transformed by action which combines concrete experience and active experimentation.

Lecturers should take cognisance of the role of experience and learning styles, for example Kolb's categorisation, when presenting lectures and subject content to students by oral, visual and auditory means. Students' personal experience and the recognition of their prior learning should inform instruction.

In an adult education programme which was done via television in Canada, Boak, Kompf and Boak (1994:8-9) report that the design of the programme was predicated on a number of assumptions about how adults learn and the role of previous learning and experience in the process of gaining new knowledge. In this programme learning experience was vital, since it facilitated involvement, dialogue and critical reflection amongst students, instructors, lecturers, facilitators and guests. Any adult programme and learning experience should indeed be aimed to advance the individual's thinking and contribute to improved performance.

Content schemata play an important role in reading comprehension (cf **3.4.3 Reading and comprehension**). These content schemata rely on a person's background knowledge and they are often culture specific. This viewpoint supports the notion which suggests that learning experience has a strong influence on study and eventually

study reading. For instance, certain words used by an author trigger memories in the reader which enable him or her to comprehend what is being read (cf **3.4.4. Decoding and comprehension**). These memories depend on previous learning and learning experience.

### 2.4.7 Approach to learning

An approach to learning reflects the interaction between the strategy a student uses to master learning content and a student's current motivation (Biggs, 1989:12). Entwistle and Waterston (1988:264) define a *learning approach* as: the product of the interaction between the characteristics of individual students and their perceptions of study courses, teaching and assessment procedures.

Various learning approaches and motives and strategies involved in each of the approaches have been identified.

- *Surface approach*: The motive is to *meet minimal institutional requirements*, and the congruent strategy is *limiting the target to essentials* that may be reproduced through rote learning (Biggs, 1988:129). Persons using this approach have a pre-occupation with memorisation (Watkins and Regmi, 1992:103). Quite often students who are anxious and are afraid to fail, tend to follow a surface approach (Schulze, 1992:23).
- *Deep approach*: The motive is *intrinsic interest in the content learned*, and the congruent strategy is *discovering meaning and acquiring competence by reading* widely, interrelating with existing knowledge (Biggs, 1988:129). Students who are interested in the content of a subject and who are intrinsically motivated tend to follow a deep approach (Schulze, 1992:23).
- *Achieving approach*: Here the motive is *ego enhancement through high grades*, and the congruent strategy is *organising time, working space and syllabus coverage* in the most efficient way (Biggs, 1988:129). Students who are

achieving approachers tend to be in competition for highest grades in their various academic fields (Watkins and Regmi, 1992:103).

- *Surface-achieving approach*: The motive is *also to achieve*, but the student conceives *accurate reproduction* of much detail as the way to do so (Biggs, 1988:129).
- *Deep-achieving approach*: The student is motivated *both by intrinsic interest as well as high grades*, and thus approaches work through *an organised and strategic search for meaning* (Biggs, 1988:129).

The low level of students' study perfomance and their inability to reach a deep-level approach to their studies may be the result of many factors: the students' personal situations, their academic backgrounds, approaches to study and the text itself (Marland, Patching, Putt and Putt, 1990:89).

It seems that different approaches to learning are effective in arts vis-a-vis science subjects, and then in objective vis-a-vis essay type tests. Different approaches to learning are also effective, depending on the method used for combining marks for the final evaluation. Students studying subjects in different departments perceive themselves to be studying in very different contexts and therefore adopt different approaches to learning (Watkins and Hattie, 1981:384).

Whichever approach or combination of approaches students adopt, there are other factors which might also influence students' choices of learning approaches or combination of approaches. These factors are:

- level of interest in the task;
- what students hope to get out of the course;
- background knowledge of the field of study;
- students' perception of the learning environment;
- nature of the assessment system;
- students' level of self-confidence in their academic ability, and

- their conceptions of learning (Watkins and Regmi, 1992:103).

The surface approach to learning is typical of learners learning through the medium of English as a second or third language. Such students tend to focus on individual words rather than grasping the over-all meaning of the text. When writing examinations or completing assignments such students would most likely rely on *verbatim* reproduction and rote memorisation (Gow, Kemper and Chow, 1991:50). A too heavy reading load could force students and especially ESL students to adopt a survival mentality and thus become surface processors (Marland, et al, 1990:89).

Each of the approaches mentioned usually produces a particular type of outcome. Surface-related approaches yield outcomes *rich in detail* but poor in structure. Deep-related approaches produce *well-structured outcomes* that may also be reflected in grade point averages (Biggs, 1989:17). Ramsden (1983:694) states that students with a high score on the deep approach are more likely to use evidence effectively, show an interest in the subject matter, reveal an active and critical interaction with what is being learnt and are able to relate academic knowledge to personal experience.

Achievement-related approaches produce *institutionally rewarded outcomes* and high grade point averages (Biggs, 1989:129). The achieving approach leads students to obtain good performance in the examinations, a good academic self-concept and feelings of satisfaction. The achieving approach usually develops from visible achievements of students and is reinforced by ego-enhancement (Biggs, 1969:287-305).

A deep-level approach is also referred to as 'holistic' and a surface approach as 'atomistic'. Students who are *holists or deep-level processors* restructure the study material in order to understand it. These students reach the highest level of transformation when they integrate themes *beyond the original information* and when they question the validity of the arguments. A second level of transformation is reached when they integrate information that is *not in the text* with supporting evidence.

Students who are holists also use cognitive skills such as the *evaluation of information*, the *application of knowledge*, the *identification of the author's conclusion* and the *formulation of an independent conclusion*. Students who are *atomists or surface-level processors* do not attempt to transform the study material. They merely memorise details resulting in a reproductive conception of learning (Cloete and Shochet, 1986:249-250).

There is an important connection between students' approaches to studying and their perception of teaching. Students pursuing surface approaches react typically in situations where there is anxiety over assessment demands. These are: perceived excessive workload, emphasis on accurate recall, threatening learning situations, and lack of intrinsic interest in the subject-matter combined with a need to pass. Deep approaches on the other hand, are associated with effective teaching, interest in the topic and the opportunity to pursue particular subjects in depth. Therefore academic departments with a perceived heavy workload, and a lack of choice over subject matter, are likely to generate reproducing strategies (Ramsden, 1983:696).

It has been shown that students are sometimes predisposed by certain psychological characteristics to adopt a particular approach to learning or there are factors which force students to adopt certain approaches to learning. Lecturers should, however, avoid situations in their teaching which might lead to students becoming surface or narrow approachers to learning. According to Biggs (1988:134-136) there are three main tasks of which lecturers should take cognisance in this regard.

- *Discouraging a surface approach:* The surface strategy is embedded in pragmatism which should be avoided when teaching. Certain practices, especially assessment and workload, induce students to bargain for minimal involvement, thereby allowing themselves to use a surface approach to learning. Lecturers should be aware of this effect.
- *Encouraging a deep approach*: If students' interests can be aroused, deep learning is likely to follow, provided students are actively involved. There are

techniques that lecturers can use within their subject areas which will encourage a deep approach and metalearning. Examples are: the promotion of guided self-questioning, using the lecturer as a model, deriving heuristics to suit the task and using other students as a resource, mainly in small group activities.

- *Developing an achieving approach*: Teaching study skills can be useful as long as it is done in a metacognitive text. Students should be encouraged towards a meaning orientation as well as towards self-management of their learning and study context.

According to Marton and Svensson (1979:473) learning consists of three main dimensions: the learner's consciousness of his learning, content or subject matter to be learned, and the context in which learning takes place. It is especially the *learner's awareness of learning* that has implications for a student's learning approach. Research by Cloete and Shochet (1986:249) has indicated that the difference between successful and unsuccessful students is often not the method used, but whether the student is aware of why he is using a specific method or technique. This leads to the importance of *metacognition*.

### 2.4.8 Metacognition

White (1992:157) asserts that Flavell's (1976) definition of metacognition is still valid: Metacognition is the awareness and control of one's own knowledge and thinking (and thus of learning). Metacognition is a very valuable factor to secure quality learning. When using metacognition, learners control their own learning by constantly using positive strategies such as:

- clarifying the purpose;
- judging whether understanding is sufficient;
- searching for connections and conflicts with what is already known;
- creating images, and
- thinking of relevant experiences.

According to Morgan et al (1998:226, 229) metacognition also allows a learner to know what learning strategies work best at different times and are appropriate for his or her individual learning style.

Metacognition *can be taught*, but training students in metacognition and thereby promoting purposeful learning takes a long time. It cannot be done as a brief intervention, but should form an integral part of instruction. Conscious, purposeful learning should be promoted by encouraging students to take on more responsibility for their own learning (White, 1992:158). Thus students can be guided to change the way in which they learn.

In two studies that were conducted by Biggs (1988:134), he came to the conclusion that when students learn after they have been instructed in metacognition, changes in learning patterns occur: 'in both secondary and tertiary students' motives and strategies following a metacognitively based intervention, with greatest changes occurring in deep motive and achieving strategy ...'

In order to change their study approach from a surface-level to a deep-level approach, students need to be committed because *commitment* is the key to effective learning. If there is no commitment, learning will remain shallow, and students will feel no value in reflecting on the meaning of what they hear or read. Commitment also fosters metacognition. Commitment and the desire to know, depend on the *awareness of control over* learning which is one of the facets of metacognition (White, 1992:159-160).

Metacognition instruction does away with the traditional prescriptive pattern of improving student learning. In this approach students are taught certain procedures such as note-taking, recitation, self-testing and scheduling. The evidence for the effectiveness of this approach is equivocal. By teaching metacognition, learning is enhanced and the learner's perspective is taken into account. The learners can now be aware of their cognitive processes and exert control over them (Biggs, 1988:127).

*Self-questioning* plays a role in this control. Questions such as the following can be asked:

- Why am I doing this?
- Do I understand it?
- If this is so, what are the implications?
- What else do I know about this? (White, 1992:157)

*Metalearning* is used when a student matches strategy with motive and task to produce a desired outcome. The *surface approach* involves *metalearning* if the reproductive or surface strategy is used to reproduce fact and detail correctly. Students adopt a surface approach as an unreflective and short-term reaction to a salient learning context. In the *achieving* and especially the *deep-achieving approaches* high degrees of *metalearning* are presupposed. The reason is that these approaches require greater self-knowledge and task-knowledge which are both necessary for academic learning (Biggs, 1988:129).

The promotion of metacognition has curricular implications. The main implication is that the curriculum must be flexible and allow room for the teacher to exercise judgement. An important aspect of metacognition is that learners should control their own thinking. This means that the learner must be independent of the lecturer and that a measure of the direction taken in instruction, for instance in the provided study material for distance education students, needs to be surrendered to the learner. This again points to the judgement as expressed by the lecturer; and the curriculum should not hamper this judgement. If the learning content is delimited too narrowly in the curriculum, it can lead to uniform and shallow learning (White, 1992:158-159).

As far as study reading and metacognition are concerned, Singer and Donlan (1989:120) stress the fact that lecturers should teach their students to use their *metacognitive abilities* to be *active* in the **process of reading**. This can be done by formulating their own questions and then reading to answer their own questions, thus directing and regulating their cognitive processes in responding to text. The role of

metacognition in the reading process and especially in study reading is discussed in more depth in **3.4.2 Reading and metacognition** and in **4.8 Distance education lecturers and student study reading**.

## 2.5 INFLUENCE OF STUDENT'S ENVIRONMENT

Adult learners, and especially distance education students, learn within a multi-dimensional environment. Such students have to incorporate their lives, working environments, social lives and student responsibilities into the study environment. This places a strain on learning and each person has to cope with this in order to be a successful student (Steyn, 1993:3).

### 2.5.1 Physical and personal environment

In South Africa there are many external variables which could have a negative influence on the academic achievement of distance education students. The sharing of accommodation and sharing of study space are, for instance, two important variables. Fraser and Nieman (1995:120) stress the fact that the majority of distance education students in South Africa are living in unfavourable environments which are hostile to academic interests (cf **2.5.2** below). These environments are not only unfavourable because of physical violence in communities, but because of a lack of supportive infrastructures such as books and the situatedness to libraries, nearby post offices and telephones which are necessities for students studying at a distance.

If the crowded homes, lack of electricity and proper study space of many South Africans are taken into consideration, it is understandable why there is a trend at the University of South Africa, and other distance education institutions, for full-time students to flock to campuses where they can study in the libraries which offer far better study environments than those which their personal environments can offer.

The personal tasks which many distance education students have to fulfil such as the duties which their occupations require from them, their role in the circle of a family or home and daily chores take up a large amount of students' time and energy. Van Schoor and Van Helden (1997:11) add to this the many personal problems which students have. A lack of self-confidence, an inability to adjust socially and poor family relationships could, for instance, be causes of personal problems. Students' personal circumstances may also change from year to year. Students who made good progress during a certain year and qualified for admission to examinations, may suddenly be forced to drop their studies before, during or after the examinations because of family or career obligations (Adey et al, 1996:43).

Bernt and Bugbee (1993:107) are of the opinion that the successful completion of courses in distance education depends largely upon the control of external factors which compete for students' time and attention. Distance education students, and actually all students, should be able to have control over external disturbances which interfere with the time they set aside to study and their study environment. This includes matters such as moderate participation in extra-mural activities, the controlling of noise and motivating people with whom they live, as well as friends, to be supportive and to understand the demands which their studies make on them (Van Schoor and Van Helden, 1997:11).

As far as the physical study environment is concerned, students should be informed that a positive study environment will allow them to study without disturbances and to concentrate fully on their work. To study properly, students ideally need a desk and adequate lighting, a specific place to do their studying, and a quiet environment (Van Schoor and Van Helden, 1997:11). Not every student in South Africa has the privilege to study in a positive environment which is conducive to studying. Quite often lecturers do not know what the personal needs and expectations of students are. Provision should therefore be made for general and personal support for students.

### 2.5.2 Non-physical and academic environment

Any attempts to change or modify students' study strategies are only likely to be effective if the learning environment is adapted concomitantly. It will then follow that the recommended ways of studying are perceived by the students to pay off within the reward structures of the courses (Entwistle and Waterston, 1988:264).

Residential students' academic environments consist of the campus, lecture halls and their personal study environments at home or in residence. Distance education students often use their personal environment permanently for studying and therefore their personal environment becomes their academic environment as well. For many students this is the only academic environment they know.

For this reason lecturers should help to establish a student's academic environment by (Guskin, 1994:19-20):

- encouraging student/faculty contact;
- encouraging cooperation among students;
- encouraging active learning;
- giving prompt feedback;
- emphasising time on task;
- communicating high expectations, and
- respecting diverse talents and ways of learning.

Guskin (1994:19) further suggests certain procedures that could be implemented by distance education lecturers in order to create a successful academic environment for students. Lecturers should:

- provide a high intensity of interaction and feedback;
- have specific goals and established procedures;
- provide motivation;

- provide a continual feeling of challenge, one that is neither so difficult as to create a sense of hopelessness and frustration, nor so easy as to produce boredom;
- provide a sense of direct engagement, thus producing a sense of direct contact with an academic environment, and being directly involved with the learning task;
- provide appropriate tools that suit the user and the task so well that they aid and do not distract, and
- avoid distraction and disruptions that intervene and impede the subjective experience.

From a report on research which was conducted by Trigwell and Prosser (1991:263-264) on the influence of the academic environment on students' approaches to learning, certain inferences could be drawn, such as that the quality of learning outcomes may result from the *establishment of an academic environment which encourages deep learning*. Another factor which played a role is that the environment is often the *environment as perceived by students*, not necessarily the objective environment, and this *perceived environment* is reciprocal to their approach to learning. Approaches to teaching and approaches to learning contain two dimensions: *intention and strategy*. A lecturer's intentions behind a certain strategy to improve his or her teaching, should be genuine. Only by having the intention of improving the quality of learning outcome, will such strategies succeed. Another factor concerns the *level of intervention*. Initiatives on the part of the individual lecturer or instructor may be appropriate, but not sufficient. Some items and factors which relate to deeper approaches to learning on the part of the students, may require *departmental changes* (Trigwell and Prosser, 1991:263-264).

These factors call for well-planned academic support from the side of lecturers. Such planning should be even better when the tutorial packages are designed for distance education students. Elements such as opportunities for personal contact, encouraging

active and deep learning, prompt feedback, communicating high expectations and motivation should for instance, be included in distance education tutorial packages.

## 2.6 THE AFFECTIVE DOMAIN

All people, and therefore distance education students as well, experience emotional fluctuations. Generally speaking, a certain maturity should be present in order to succeed when studying by means of distance education. The divergent social involvements and responsibilities of distance education students exert an influence on these students' personal affective stability. Quite often, however, the balance between affective integration and disintegration is very delicate, especially if the students do not receive the necessary *affective support* (Vorster, 1992:16).

It should be noted that the affective domain strongly influences and determines reading achievement. Studies have indicated that the *desire* to know and to understand for its own sake is a predictor of achievement at the tertiary level, along with background knowledge and an ability to study from text (Singer and Donlan, 1989:91-92). The role of the affective domain in reading and studying is discussed in **3.2.8 The affective model of reading**.

### 2.6.1 Motivation

The concept *'motivation'* encompasses all aspects of stimulation: motives, needs, interests, inclinations, aspirations, aims, ambitions in life, ideals and more (Pschebilski, 1985:197). Motivation is the driving force behind a person's actions. To make a success of studies, a student should be well-motivated because motivation, both intrinsic and extrinsic, induces a student to study. Motivation includes aspects such as needs, values, attitudes and aspirations. It is a regulatory process which directs and guides learning and behaviour (Morgan et al, 1998:215).

As far as adult education is concerned, motivation can among others be determined by listing the hoped-for benefits adults expect to receive as a result of participating in it. Examples are promotion at work, making new friends or preparing oneself for a holiday. Motivation can, however, also be regarded as a psychological disposition, a state of readiness, or a willingness to participate, regardless of the possible results of the activity in question (Cropley, 1985:23-24).

Without the necessary motivation, *no goal can be attained.* If students do not have the necessary motivation, they will not be successful in their studies. Lack of motivation can sometimes be traced back to domestic, occupational and personality problems since problems in any of these areas have a negative influence on motivation (Adey, Gous, Heese and Le Roux, 1996:55).

The role of motivation in adult education can be described as follows (Cropley, 1985:30). Motivation is:

- the general disposition to participate or not to, and this respectively leads to a *state of readiness or unreadiness*;
- *particular goals or motives* or hoped for end-results channel this readiness, and
- *participation* continues or ceases according to the *success of the experience.*

Most adult students who study by means of correspondence or off-campus programmes, are (at least initially) highly motivated to learn and motivation suspends adult learner behaviour to a degree. In this sense it is clear that distance education has the advantages of a more highly motivated student group. The motivation, however, of adults learning by means of distance education provides a very difficult context for the design of effective learning experiences (Hough, 1984:19 & 21).

Tuckman (1991:168-171) distinguishes between internal and external factors that affect students' motivation. *Internal factors* are those factors which are under the control of the student. The most important factor that affects motivation is the *amount of self-*

*confidence* a student has in his or her capability to perform tasks. Self-confidence in the ability to perform a task is an important motivational variable which should always be taken into account. The second internal factor is the tendency to *procrastinate*. Students who tend to put things off, are harder to motivate than students who do not have this proclivity.

*External factors* (except for monetary incentives) that affect motivation are generally under the control of the lecturer or instructor. Tuckman (1991:170-171) distinguishes between the following:

* the magnitude or openendedness of the task;
* the informational feedback;
* setting goals or outcomes that are attainable;
* encouraging feedback, and
* the nature of the performance criteria - normative or absolute.

Morgan et al (1998:221) advise lecturers to actually *discuss motivation* during lectures. Motivation energises students' behaviour and gives it direction. It leads to a goal by turning learning into performance. Since certain external factors which affect motivation are under the control of lecturers, they should incorporate motivational talk when designing study material for distance education students.

It has been discovered that there is a marked difference between the attitudes of younger and more mature students. Mature students tend to be less motivated by pragmatic concerns and more liable to adopt a deep-level approach to their work than younger students. For adult students achievement is often tied to promotion and their careers (Watkins, 1983:53).

Attitudal, motivational and personality factors play a greater role in the achievement of older students than is the case with younger students. For more mature students motivation is a critical factor, in as much as adult learners are not required to engage

in education in the same way as younger students (Bernt and Bugbee, 1993:99-100).

The motivation of older students is generally the best advantage they enjoy. Adult students tend to study on account of choice and interest. They usually have clear objectives and are thus genuinely motivated (Jones and Johnson, 1990:24). Watkins and Hattie (1981:392) found that in all faculties, males and younger students are inclined to be pragmatically motivated and to adopt reproductive study methods and approaches to learning which are negatively correlated to academic success. Compare this with the surface approach and deep-level approach to learning which is discussed in **2.4.7 Approach to learning**.

The strengthening or weakening of motivation has a positive or negative effect on future educational activities. Motivation is reciprocal to the suitability of the course to the demands and the learning requirements expressed; the clearer the practical relevance and applicability of the material to be learned, the greater the link with earlier learning experience (Siebert, 1985:45).

Tuckman's research (1991:168-169) stresses *self-confidence* as the first and most important factor that affects students' motivation. The more self-confidence students have, the more successful they are. The *confidence* of the student studying at a distance is the key variable determining success through distance teaching (Gibson and Graf, 1992:48).

To help adult students to be motivated by increasing their confidence, the following factors should be fostered (Cropley, 1985:31):

- *a positive attitude to learning*: students should believe learning is a worthwhile activity;
- a *positive self-image as learners*: students should believe that they can learn, and

- *confidence in the adult education system*: students should believe that participation will lead to worthwhile outcomes.

Lecturers should motivate their students and this requires a set of procedures specific to the phenomenon of motivation. The following sequence of procedures concerning classroom motivational tasks could be followed: strategise, commit, orchestrate, activate, reward, monitor, adjust and routenise (Tuckman, 1991:175-176).

The motivation of adult students has certain implications which can be described in terms of teaching practice for lecturers (Cropley, 1985:31-33):

- *Organisation*: Physical access to adult education should be facilitated. It should at the same time be linked to settings in which adults feel competent, knowledgeable, on familiar ground, and in which they see an obvious connection between what they are doing and their own real lives.
- *Content*: The content of adult education should be closely connected with real life needs and interests of the learners.
- *Teaching and learning activities*: Adult learners should be permitted to regulate their own learning by, for instance, self-pacing and self-evaluation. Independent learning, even distance education, could offer many advantages in adult learning.
- *Educational technology*: It is advised that greater use of educational technology and other forms of communication than the spoken word should be made. This will facilitate independent or self-directed learning and self-pacing (cf **4.3 Distance education, technology and computers**).
- *Staff and staff training*: Educators of adults need to be skilled in distance education methods, in techniques of joint planning with learners, in the guiding of self-evaluation and the promotion of self-directed learning. They should have knowledge of the psychology of learning for adults and be capable of working outside a strict, traditional institutional structure. They should also develop a definition of their own role which diverges to some degree from the traditional

self-image of teachers as the only source of knowledge (cf **4.2.4 Distance education: lecturers as persons**).

- *Dangers and problems*: Sometimes adult education is labelled as being 'recreational' or 'remedial' by nature. It is important that adult education should have clearly stated goals and that steps should be taken to ascertain whether these goals are being realised.

Good teaching increases motivation which in return incites proper learning. The instructional strategies that teaching departments choose, either help to motivate or demotivate students. When teaching departments use instructional strategies that are not consistent with a reflective mode of learning and that do not motivate students, it is difficult to ensure that students reconstruct their conceptual frameworks. If students are motivated to be enthused about their studies, it should be possible to lead them to reflect on their work; they will be able to explore, compare and integrate, thus forming proper conceptual structures. Students who are more highly motivated, learn subject content with greater success than those who are disinterested, irrespective of how the subject content is presented (Guskin, 1994:22-23). The importance of student motivation is highlighted in **4.8.8 Enhancing students' motivation and interest**.

Those responsible for the writing and designing of distance education study material, should ensure that continuous motivation runs like a golden thread through all the study material that their students are exposed to. As the distance educator is usually not present in the teaching-learning situation, all kinds of motivation and words of encouragement and support should be included in the study material. The various external factors which are under the control of lecturers should, for instance, be included in lecturers' various forms of teaching practice (cf **4.8 Distance education lecturers and possible forms of student support**).

### 2.6.2 Interest

Interest is an essential ingredient for successful study since it is one of the directing factors of personality. The right time to study in a certain direction, is when there is sufficient and genuine interest on the part of the student (Adey et al, 1996:56). There is a close link between students' interest and learning, especially deep learning. If a student's interest can be aroused, then deep learning is likely to take place. The condition is that a student should become actively involved (Watkins and Hattie, 1981:392). Knowledge can also be combined with a personal investment in the learning process, as evidenced by strong interest in the content and strategic effort. Lower levels of knowledge, interest and strategic ability distinguish less successful learners from more successful learners (Alexander and Murphy, 1998:443-444).

There is also a close *link between motivation and interest*. It was found that students with a high achievement motivation, sustained interest in study tasks, even when they were interrupted or the studies were extended over a period of time (Jonassen and Grabowski, 1993:389). If students should enrol for courses in which they have little or no interest, it can lead to frustration and poor achievement. *Lack of interest* also has a negative influence on students' attitudes and on their motivation (Adey et al, 1996:56).

As far as distance education students are concerned, Wong (1992:16) argues that distance education students have a greater interest in the courses they are studying than residential students. This is quite often reflected in their examination results. The fact that many distance education students have less time to spend on study and that many have other duties and responsibilities, might force these students to be more focused on and interested in their studies.

Lecturers should know and ascertain whether their students are really interested in the courses they follow. The content of the study material of distance education students, should be designed in such a way that it arouses and keeps the interest of learners. In

the *Report of the national committee on further education* (Department of Education, 1997b:43) it is recommended that the movement to *an outcomes based education and training system* should move away from rigid syllabi and level-based textbooks towards *a range of materials and media* that can assist learners to attain the required outcomes. In a range of materials and media, lecturers can surely make provision for content and processes which will interest students.

## 2.7 PHASES OF LIFE

There is a growing recognition world-wide that education and training are fundamental to social and economic growth. Lifelong learning is also essential to keep abreast of changes in the nature of knowledge and production in the information age and the pace of scientific and technological changes (Department of Education, 1997b:1). In South Africa the idea of lifelong learning is therefore presently advocated by the National Department of Education. According to the *National Qualifications Framework*, lifelong learning provides opportunities for people to learn regardless of age, circumstances and the level of education and training. People are allowed to learn on an ongoing basis (Department of Education, 1996:6).

Although distance education students can be generally labelled as 'adults', it will be unrealistic to regard all students as having reached exactly the same level of development. Chronological age is obviously not a precise criterion for maturity, for one can distinguish pre-, early- , prime- and advanced adulthood, each with own characteristics and needs (Booyse, 1987:113). Gous refers to the junior adult phase, the pre-midlife phase, the midlife phase and the senior adulthood phase (Gous, 1987:22-26).

The *junior adult phase* covers late adolescense and early adulthood. The latter is the phase during which a person becomes established in a career. This phase involves growth towards intellectual, emotional, social and physical maturity. The *pre-midlife phase* is a critical transitional period in a person's life. During this phase a person has

to master new roles, meet expectations and develop new personal styles and self-concepts. In *midlife* there is a contraction of the life cycle. The person has reached a more balanced situation in his or her personality system. Quite often this person feels that growth can only be achieved through a reorientation of life goals, self-conceptions and motivation. For many this includes further study. The period of *senior adulthood* is viewed by many authors as the retirement period (Gous, 1987:22-26).

There is a close link between a student's life stage and aspirations. The young student is in a position where most aspirations with regard to a future career will start to develop. He or she will have to make many important decisions (Gous, 1987:30). Young adults are concerned with their careers and expectations in the world of work, with the demands of marriage and parenthood and with their new roles which have to be structured (Adey et al, 1996:53). Lecturers should therefore take cognisance of the expectations and demands of the younger students.

The older student, phasing into midlife, enters a world where new aspirations are born. In the search for more meaningful ways to accommodate aspirations, this person encounters a diversity of problems (Gous, 1987:30). Many factors can influence older students' aspirations, such as children starting school, or children going from primary to secondary school, or children embarking on their own studies and careers. Older students may find a change of roles necessary. They may encounter problems in their professional life or in their personal life (Adey et al, 1996:53). Lecturers should help older students to experience study as a growth factor, which would call for recognition of the complexity of this life stage.

## 2.8 LANGUAGE PROFICIENCY

The importance of the relationship of language to cognition is vital for effective study. Language is believed to be critical to learning as a learner uses language to code and decode information (Morgan et al, 1998:224) (cf **2.4.2 Information-processing**).

When referring to language problems, two main problems are apparent. The one problem area is that of the *general proficiency in a language*, usually the language of instruction. General proficiency in a language refers to the ability to participate in everyday, non-specialised discourse. The other problem area is *proficiency in the specific languages* which are used in specialised subject communication. Such a specialised language which is used for educational purposes, is characterised by the use of a specific vocabulary, consisting of standardised and non-standardised terms, by a specific selection, usage and frequency of syntactical and lexical forms taken from the general language and by the use of non-verbal signs and abbreviations of rather complex states (Swanepoel, 1987:115-116).

As discussed in **Chapter one**, many students embarking upon tertiary education in South Africa exhibit language deficiencies, usually because they lack proficiency in the language of instruction. These students are mostly speakers of English as a second (or even a third or fourth) language, which can be problematic if they have to study through English as the medium of instruction. In addition, there is very often also a lack of specialised language training on tertiary level, which exacerbate the language problems that many students have.

Note the following distinction between various forms of second language proficiency (further discussed in **3.5 Reading and studying in English as a second language**) :

- *BICS* - basic interpersonal communicative skills;
- *CALP* - cognitive academic learning proficiency, and
- *LEP* - limited English proficiency

For academic purposes, students' language proficiency should be developed beyond engaging in a casual conversation (BICS), to being able to read or write complex academic text (CALP). Lecturers should therefore always be aware of the influence which language abilities and inabilities have on their students' study success.

(The influence of reading and studying in English as a second language (ESL), is discussed in **3.5 Reading and studying in English as a second language** and in **4.8 Distance education lecturers and student's study reading**.)

## 2.9 SYNTHESIS

In this chapter a profile of the distance education student was compiled. It was indicated that distance education students are *adult learners*. Those aspects of adult students' personal profiles which are important for study and study reading success were especially highlighted.

A description of the characteristics and the life phases of distance education students stressed the fact that many individual differences, *inter alia* language abilities, exist which in turn give rise to unique learning styles. An investigation into the many aspects relating to the cognitive processes of distance education students revealed that various approaches to learning exist. The learners' awareness of their learning processes indicates the importance of metacognition. The importance of a stable affective basis for learning and studying was also discussed.

It was indicated that special attention should be given to the *needs* of the distance education adult student, especially the *cognitive and motivational needs*. Lecturers should be familiar with the learning requirements of their students and they should ensure that the study material is designed in such a way that it makes provision for their learning needs. By keeping the students motivated, a lecturer can support them to develop a suitable affective base, thus changing when necessary from a surface approach to a deep level approach where they can *achieve* in their learning and studying activities.

Since this thesis focuses on the enhancement of the study reading skills of distance education students, an investigation into prevailing reading theories will be done in the ensuing chapter. Study reading and reading in a second language, will be the specific focus of investigation.

# CHAPTER 3

# THE PHENOMENON OF READING AND STUDY READING

## 3.1 INTRODUCTION

Research on reading processes is largely linked to research on cognitive psychology. This chapter deals mainly with the cognitive processes in reading. The reading process as it applies to mature readers and especially to students who read for study purposes, will be discussed.

Reading research has many facets. Venezky (1984:4) describes it aptly. It '... [l]ike Joseph's coat, the history of reading research is a thing of many colors. It is not a single, continuous stream of human endeavor but at least four and perhaps as many as six independent threads, each with its own methods and each moving to the beat of a different drummer.'

Since reading research is 'a thing of many colors', it is logical that there would be paradigmatic diversity within the reading community. Shannon (1989:97), for example, identifies three paradigms: the empirical/analytic paradigm, the symbolic paradigm and the critical scientific paradigm. There are also too many and other classifications of paradigms and each paradigm has different aims and objectives, different values and social interests, different conceptions of reading and writing, different understandings of causality and different methods and forms of logic.

This thesis is written within the context of didactics or instructional science and therefore an in-depth discussion of the linguistic and psycholinguistic dimensions of reading will not fall within the ambit of this study. Since the emphasis in this thesis is on the *cognitive processes of reading* and not on the perceptual processes such as

visual and auditory discrimination, oral reading and beginning reading (which encompass letter identification, phonics and structural analyses), the perceptual processes will not be discussed. Eye-movement, fixations and perceptual abilities which fall in the field of experimental psychology, will also not be dealt with. However, reading comprehension, which includes pre-reading, text interaction and post-reading, which is of importance for study reading will be covered in this chapter. The pedagogy of adult reading, adult study reading and the instruction of study reading will therefore be the main issues.

## 3.2 READING DEFINED, READING THEORIES AND READING MODELS

### 3.2.1 Introduction: Defining key concepts

It is necessary to have a clear understanding of what reading, studying, study reading, reading theories and reading models entail, since these are indispensable aspects in this study.

#### 3.2.1.1 Reading

There are many definitions of reading. The researcher agrees with the following definition by Packwood (1994:18) as it represents a comprehensive description of the reading process:

Reading is much more than the decoding of black marks on a page: it is a *quest for meaning* and one which requires the *reader to be an active participant*. Readers turn the monologue of written text into a dialogue in which they engage with the text for their own purposes, which can be for: *information, confirmation, instruction* and for pleasure.

Readers are able to *interpret the text* and give it context *by bringing their own experience* to bear on it. Such experiences are culturally orientated and emanate from *prior knowledge*.

Reading for the purposes of gaining information, confirmation and instruction is associated with *study reading*, whereas reading for the purpose of pleasure, deals with entertainment.

### 3.2.1.2 Studying

Anderson(1979:95) indicates the following connection between studying and reading: 'The process of studying is a criteria-related, self-directed form of reading text ... This is accomplished by collecting previously administered tests, lecture notes, and other evidence related to the criterion event, such as an examination ... ' Studying therefore implies understanding, remembering and being able to apply what was read (cf **3.2.1.3 Study reading**).

### 3.2.1.3 Study reading

Study reading could thus be seen as a dialogue between a student and a particular text, for the purposes of gaining information from the text for understanding, remembering and application. In this interactive process between students and text, the students also endeavour to confirm the content of the text. The idea is to learn, to remember and to use this specific knowledge or procedures at a later stage. The *quest for meaning* and the fact that readers bring their *own personal experiences to a text* are important elements in the reading process.

### 3.2.1.4 Reading theories and reading models

There are different theories and models of the reading process. Particular theories and models which will be discussed in this chapter, have been selected because each one contributes to a better understanding of the reading process and study reading. It should be noted that although the terms *theories* and *models* are used interchangeably by some authors, they are not identical. A *theory* of reading is an explanation of a phenomenon such as reading whereas a *model* is a way of depicting a theory's variables, mechanisms, constructs and their interrelationships. Furthermore, a theory is also dynamic, because it describes the way in which a model operates. Theories and models should always be understood in relationship to their purposes, that is what they are trying to explain, and only then should they be evaluated in terms of their aptness and effectiveness (Singer and Ruddell, 1985:620).

In order for models to be useful they should meet three criteria. A sound model should firstly be broad and encompassing enough to summarise and synthesise large volumes of relevant information collected in the past. Secondly, it should facilitate understanding of what is happening in the present. Lastly, it should facilitate in the formulation of hypotheses and predictions about what will happen in the future (Samuels, 1985:719).

For the purposes of this thesis the emphasis will be on the *dynamics of the reading process*. It will therefore be imperative to indicate how the various *reading models* and *reading theories* could be put into practice, in order to enhance the study reading skills of students.

### 3.2.2 The bottom-up and top-down models of reading

Recent developments in reading research tend to stress the importance of *interactive models* of reading, in contrast to the bottom-up and top-down models that were used earlier. *Bottom-up reading models* conceive the flow of information in a series of discrete stages, with each stage transforming the input and then passing the recorded information on to the next cognitive stage for additional recording and transformation. Therefore the *bottom-up reading models* start with the printed stimuli and work their way up to higher levels of cognition (Samuels and Kamil, 1984:212). When a person reads, he or she first has to learn letters and letter features, then digraphs, followed by single words, phrases, sentences and eventually the semantics of meaning (Flanagan, 1995:12).

An important shortcoming of the bottom-up reading models, is the lack of feedback, in that no mechanisms are designed to allow for processing stages which occur later in the system, to influence processing which occurs earlier in the system. Because of the lack of feedback it is difficult to account for sentence-context effects and the role of prior knowledge of text topics on word recognition and comprehension (Samuels and Kamil, 1984:212).

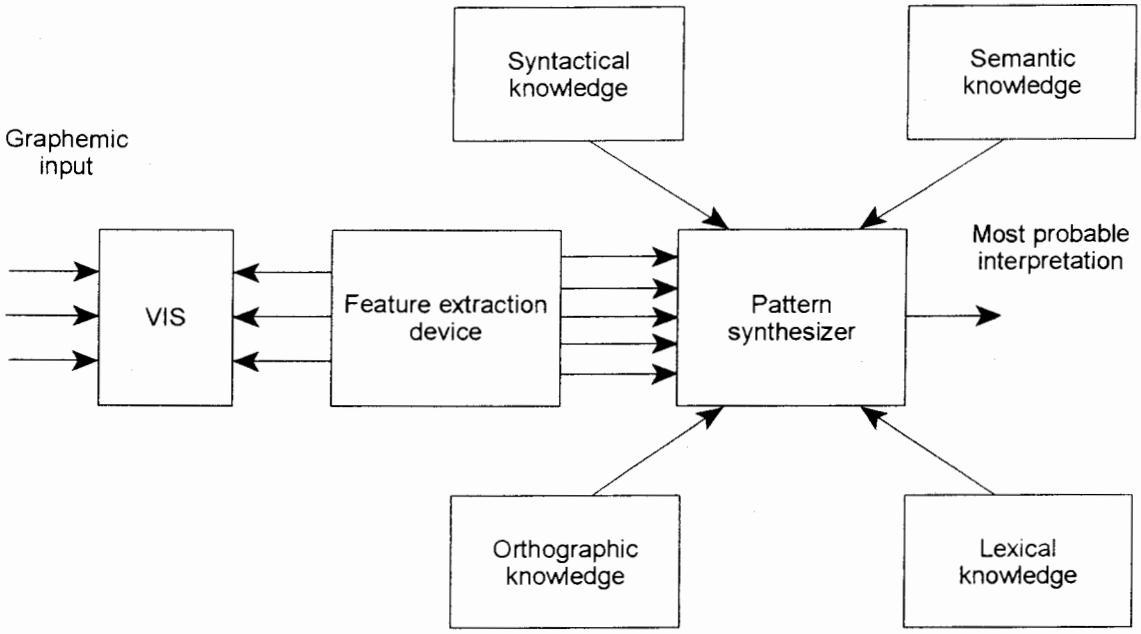
*Top-down reading models* initially generate hypotheses and predictions and then attempt to verify these by working down the printed stimuli. *Top-down reading models* also conceptualise the reading process as one in which stages which are higher up at the end of information processing, interact with stages which occur earlier in the sequence. In these models the reader only *samples text* information in order to verify hypotheses and predictions. Reading is thus viewed as being conceptually driven by the higher order cognitive stages, rather than by low level stimulus analyses (Samuels and Kamil, 1984:212)

*Top-down processing* is concept driven. The learner needs to have a concept of written language and its functions in order to read. This is called having a concept of the print (Flanagan, 1995:12).

An impediment to the top-down reading models, is that the reader may have little knowledge of the topic and is notable to generate predictions. To be able to make informed predictions during reading, a person should have a certain fundamental knowledge of a language, as well as specific skills. The skills include mental plans or strategies to reach a set purpose, self-regulation in order to evaluate the learning process and metacognition (Hendrix and Hulshof,1994:23). A more serious problem is that even if skilled readers can generate predictions, the *amount of time* necessary to generate a prediction may be greater than the amount of time skilled readers need simply to recognise the words (Samuels and Kamil, 1984:212).

It seems reasonable to assume that *both the top-down and the bottom-up models of reading* are generally *simultaneously involved in the reading process*. In order to be able to comprehend text fluently, both decoding skills and the active prediction of meanings on the basis of textual cues and the reader's cognitive schemata are required (Cummins, 1984a:233). This is verified by Rumelhart's theory of reading comprehension. The following representation of Rumelhart's theory as explained by Lapp and Flood (1983:165) depicts the dual process, that is both top-down and bottom-up processing while reading:

Figure 3.1
Rumelhart's theory of reading




*(Lapp and Flood, 1983:165)*

In *bottom-up processing,* the reader begins with graphemic input which is fed into the VIS (visual information store) which serves as a reservoir of orthographic features from which the Feature Extraction Device draws the most critical features. These essential features then serve an input into the Pattern Synthesizer which extracts the 'most probable interpretation' of the information received. If a reader arrives at understanding by using semantic knowledge, that is beginning on the Pattern Syntheziser, to formulate a correct hypothesis, the *top-down process* is at work (Lapp and Flood, 1983:164-165).

### 3.2.2.1 Instructional implications of the bottom-up and top-down models of reading

Both *top-down and bottom-up models* of reading have definite teaching implications for students and especially for students who are *studying through the medium of English as a second language*. As discussed, *top-down models of reading* portray readers as generators of educated predictions who rely to a large extent on context clues when constructing the meaning of a text. This fact is endorsed by recent research on ESL reading, in which it is recommended that students *focus on meaning* rather than language or vocabulary development, when they read in a second language. As far as *bottom-up models* are concerned, it must be kept in mind that rapid, precise letter and word recognition needs to be mastered before fluent reading can take place. Thus reading in a second language requires processing of written language in both top-down and bottom-up ways (Haynes, 1993:47-48, 60).

Distance education students who have to rely on reading as the only means of gaining information, may encounter difficulties with certain subject content, because they have no lecturer or tutor who can explain uncertainties to them. They may have little knowledge of a subject and, therefore, they cannot generate predictions when they do not understand certain words or concepts. If reading is defined only in terms of the top-down reading models, it is clear that distance education students needs to be supported to ensure that they understand everything they have to read and study.

Lecturers should ensure that, when reading, their students have and also use the necessary decoding skills as advocated by the *bottom-up reading models*. The active prediction of meanings on the basis of textual cues which form part of the *top-down models of reading*, might pose problems, especially for novice students who have little or no knowledge about a subject which they are studying for the first time. It is recommended that students should be guided to understand new subject related

terminology as it might be difficult for them to make informed and educated predictions (cf **4.8.7 Addressing language related variables and problems in reading**).

### 3.2.3 The substrata-factor theory of reading

What is significant about the substrata-factor theory generated by Holmes and Singer (and their successors), is their use of empirically gathered evidence to evaluate the theory. In contrast to other theorists who conceptualise a logical consistent theory, and only then devise experiments to evaluate the efficacy of its components, Holmes and Singer used already available data to arrive at the composition of their model (Samuels and Kamil, 1984:186).

The substrata-factor theory of reading, represents an attempt to *identify elements* within reading performance which account *for reading achievement* (Early, 1991:146). The substrata-factor theory states that in trying to attain speed or comprehension in reading, people mobilise their *substrata-factors* (knowledge structures) into *a momentary working system* to solve a problem in reading. At one moment, the problem may be to identify a printed word or select an appropriate meaning for a word or to draw an inference from a passage. A different working system is mobilised for each of these problems. As a reader's purposes, difficulty of reading material or types of content to be read, change even within one passage, the reader organises, mobilises and reorganises substrata-factors into momentary working systems in response to each change (Singer, 1985:641).

The substrata-factor theory and its models were formulated to explain the structure and dynamics of reading. Hence their primary contribution is to the psychology and not primarily to the pedagogy of reading. For a primary contribution to the pedagogy of reading, the theory and its models could be expanded to include the role of the reading instructor (Singer, 1985:653).

### 3.2.3.1 Instructional implications of the substrata-factor theory of reading

The substrata-factor reading theory has direct implications for the teaching of subject content. It is important that students, when reading and studying, should know that each written passage has its *own purpose* or *objectives* . Students should change their reading strategies by organising, mobilising and reorganising substrata-factors according to the reading purposes or objectives, as well as the reading difficulty of the specific text.

Quite often students do not know that *each subject* has its own *subject-related reading strategies* and that *differing strategies* should be used in the various texts which they have to read and study. For instance, reading the text used in language instruction, and reading a mathematics text differ completely, and students should know this. This aspect will be further discussed in **3.4.5 Purposes for reading**. Knowing purposes and objectives for reading can help students to know what to focus on while reading, in order to select a suitable reading strategy congruent with a specific reading task at hand (cf **4.8.5 Helping students to set purposes and goals (desired outcomes) for reading** and **4.8.7 Addressing language related variables and problems in reading**).

## 3.2.4 The information processing model of reading

This model emphasises the fact that there are two tasks which are performed when reading, that is *decoding* and *comprehension*. *Decoding* comprises moving information from the printed word to some articulatory or phonological representation of the printed stimulus. *Comprehension* on the other hand comprises deriving meaning from the material which has been decoded. Both these processes require the reader's attention. The amount of attention required varies with coding skill, familiarity with the words in

the text, as well as the topic and density of idea units found in the text. *Attention,* therefore, lies at the heart of this model (Samuels and Kamil, 1984:197).

The route taken by words from their written form on a page to the eventual activation of their meaning and thus comprehension, involves several stages of information processing. The stages of information processing include processes such as the visual word code, which has to link up with the phonological word code in reading. Thereafter, a direct associative connection between the phonological unit and the semantic meaning codes should take place (LaBerge and Samuels, 1985:703).

For a competent reader this type of processing takes a very short time, usually only a fraction of a second. During reading, it is necessary to coordinate many component processes within a very short period of time. If each component processing requires undue attention, performance of a complex skill such as reading will be impossible, because the capacity of attention will be exceeded. For fluent and successful reading it is therefore necessary that the processing of some component subskills becomes automatic (LaBerge and Samuels, 1985:689).

### 3.2.4.1 Instructional implications of the information processing model of reading

Instructional strategies which could help students with information processing when reading includes frequent encounters with each new or unknown word, as well as strategies which entail elaboration, a discussion of word meaning and opportunities to use the words taught outside the instructional situation. Students could be asked to compare and contrast words, or to use words by creating contexts for them.

When a student studies without really understanding what is being studied, parrot learning calling for mere repetition which represents a surface approach to learning takes place (cf **2.4.7 Approach to learning**). The *comprehension dimension* of the

information processing reading model is therefore most important for study reading. Activities which encourage active processing should not merely call for assimilating new information into the memory, but should rather help students to *combine* new information with known information in order to construct new word meanings. Here the value of *prior knowledge* becomes evident. Various forms of support should thus be provided to distance education students to enhance their comprehension of unknown words in reading tasks at hand (cf **3.4.3 Reading and comprehension** and **3.4.4 Decoding and comprehension** for more detail on comprehension in the reading process).

### 3.2.5 The interactive model of reading

Various researchers such as Gough (1972), La Berge and Samuels (1974) have investigated interactive models of reading. A fairly recent interactive model of the reading process was compiled by Ruddell and Speaker. According to these two researchers the reading process encompasses four interactive components.

- The *reader environment component* includes the immediate textual, conversational and instructional features used by the reader in constructing meaning from the text.

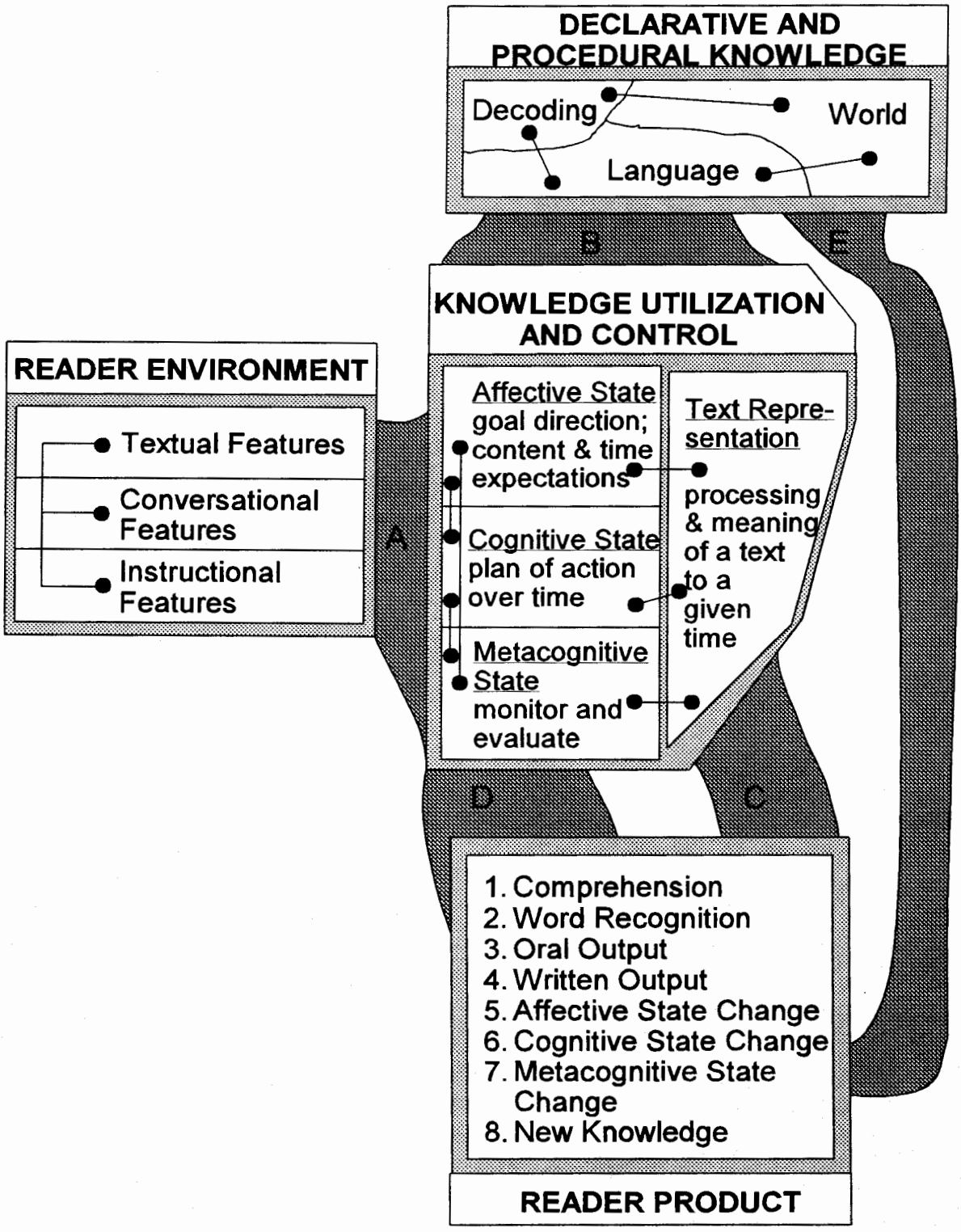
- The *knowledge utilisation and control component* influences the processing of the text and the activation of information and procedures. The reader's affective, cognitive and metacognitive states, defined as the reader's goals and expectations, plan of action and ability to monitor and evaluate are included in this component of the model, as well as the reader's interpretation of meaning of the text.

- The *declarative and procedural knowledge component* includes the reader's store of schemata related to decoding, language and knowledge of the reader's world. Declarative knowledge includes the repertoire of information about decoding, language and the world which is stored in memory. Procedural knowledge encompasses the strategies for processing text which must be appropriately activated for comprehension.

- The *reader product component* represents the outcome of the interactions between reader environment, knowledge utilisation and control, and declarative and procedural knowledge. Eight products are specified: comprehension, word recognition, oral output, written output, affective state change, cognitive state change, metacognitive state change and new knowledge (Ruddell and Speaker, 1985:751-753).

The interactive model as discussed in the above paragraph is organised around five interactions which link the four components. These five interactions are: Environment interaction, knowledge interaction, product construction and evaluation interaction, affective/cognitive/metacognitive interaction and new knowledge interaction. These interactions occur simultaneously during the reading process rather than in a fixed sequence. Each interaction, however, is controlled by the knowledge utilisation and control component of the model (Ruddell and Speaker, 1985:772-773). A diagrammatic model of the interactive reading process indicates the relationships between the various interactions.

Figure 3.2
A model of the interactive reading process




(Ruddel and Speaker, 1985:773)

The flow which occurs between the various components as described in both the top-down and the bottom-up theories, is also relevant to the interactive reading model, where the flow between the various components occurs simultaneously. The knowledge interaction refers to the formal and content schemata which a reader brings to bear on a text. The research on top-down and bottom-up models of reading is useful in this regard, as it provides a holistic view of the reading process.

Some researchers in fact regard the interactive model of reading as the interaction between top-down and bottom-up models, as well as the formal and content schemata which the reader brings to bear on the text (Coady, Magoto, Hubbard, Craney and Mokhtari, 1993:217).

#### 3.2.5.1 Instructional implications of the interactive model of reading

The text at hand should be designed in such a way that it supports the reader's *comprehension monitoring by using textual, conversational and instructional features.* Lecturers have to take care in the design of the text to be read and studied. The role of lecturers in text design and the control lecturers have over the text will be discussed in the last part of **4.8 Distance education lecturers and student study reading**.

The *knowledge utilisation and control component* stresses that readers' outcomes for reading should be defined and that reader support should be provided to enable them to monitor and evaluate during the reading process. The knowledge utilisation and control component which stresses that readers' goals for reading should be defined, links up with **3.4.5 Purposes for reading**. Further teaching implications of this component are discussed in **4.8.5 Helping students to set purposes and goals (desired outcomes) for reading**.

The *declarative and procedural knowledge component* focuses on readers having appropriate decoding, language and background knowledge in store to be able to understand and learn when reading. The fact that many students, and especially ESL students in South Africa, often have reading problems due to a lack in language and background knowledge has far reaching teaching implications. Provision should, therefore, be made in all forms of study material to enhance students' declarative and procedural knowledge. This will again be further discussed in **4.4.2 Problems experienced by students when reading academic content**. Strategies, as well as practical examples, to enhance students' language and background knowledge will be included in **4.8** (**Distance education lecturers and student study reading**) and in the respective **Addendums**.

### 3.2.6 The interactive-compensatory model of reading

The interactive model of reading describes the synthesis of the information gained at syntactic, semantic, lexical and orthographic levels during the reading process. Stanovich (1980:32) added a *compensatory level* to the interactive model of reading, in order to explain individual differences in reading. This model assumes that reading occurs through the simultaneous processing of information at various levels. The levels are feature detection, orthographic knowledge, lexical knowledge, syntactic knowledge and semantic knowledge. When reading, a person might have a weakness at a particular level. This weakness can then be compensated for by a greater reliance on skills at other levels (Saarnio, Oka and Paris, 1990:58).

If for instance there is a deficiency in a lower-level process, a *process involving higher-order knowledge structures can compensate* for this. Thus a poor reader who has problems with decoding skills, might rely on *semantic* and *contextual factors* for word recognition (Kim and Goetz, 1994:179). On the other hand, skilled readers who do have problems with decoding skills, need not rely on the slower and deliberate use of

context in order to recognise words, but may use context for comprehension processes (Carr and Levy, 1990:58).

It was found that poor readers' reading comprehension performance could be improved, given enough time. Poor readers' slower reading time may enhance their reading comprehension and thus may compensate for their lower reading abilities. According to Kim and Goetz (1994:186) poor readers' comprehension can equal that of good readers, when they have been given sufficient time, or if they are sufficiently familiar with texts or if texts are predictable.

### 3.2.6.1 Instructional implications of the interactive-compensatory model of reading

Both *comprehension* and the *time factor* are important elements to be considered when designing study material for distance learners with language or reading problems. In the document *Norms and Standards for Educators* (Department of Education, 1998a:viii) it is stated that provision should be made for *notional time* when teaching and training students at tertiary level. According to this document notional time is '... the average time taken by an average student to complete a course of study. This should include all the time devoted to acquiring the prescribed competences; contact tuition, private study, independent work, assignments, etc.'

The South African Qualifications Authority (SAQA, 1997:9) states that notional hours should not be seen as 'real' hours. They are an informed estimate of the average time an average learner, entering with the correct level of assumed knowledge, would take to master the specific outcomes of a unit standard. Time here refers to the time spent on learning, including assignments, home study, etc. and not just the time in direct tuition or contact time.

The *Norms and Standards for Educators* (Department of Education, 1998a:116 and 120) document suggests that a 120-students' study hour time, per unit of study can be used. Such a unit (or 12 credit course) can be spread over a full year where contact is infrequent, which happens at most distance education courses or over a concentrated two-week vacation course.

When designing students' study material, it should be noted that distance learners with language and reading problems might need more time to read an amount of pages, than the notional time stipulated by *SAQA* and the *Norms and Standards for Educators* document. The decision on how many pages students should read for a certain course, should caution lecturers to take into consideration that it may take a student longer than the recommended time stipulated by *SAQA* to read and study the prescribed material. This is especially important for ESL students with limited proficiency in English. The time factor should also be kept in mind for examination purposes, especially if an examination paper requires a protracted amount of reading.

The time factor and reading comprehension may also be influenced by *difficulties in cohesion*. *Cohesion* is the *linguistic means* whereby a text is able to function as a single meaningful unit. Because of difficulties in cohesion, students may perceive all the information in a text as of equal importance, thus spending too much time reading and studying less important text parts. They should thus also be facilitated by lecturers to differentiate between more important and less important sections of the text.

### 3.2.7 The inferential model of reading

This model deals with the cognitive processes involved in text comprehension and recalling what has been read. Directly after a reader has read a text or part of a text, traces of the following processing activities remain in his or her memory:

- *visual memory traces:* what the text looked like visually, where on a certain page a sentence appeared;
- *linguistic memory traces:* some actual words and phrases used in the text;
- *microstructure propositions:* detailed content of the story, and
- *macrostructure propositions:* the overall organisation of the story in terms of its main events (Van Dijk and Kintsch, 1985:806).

A reader usually does not have much visual or linguistic memory after reading a story. The reason is that the demands of reading are such, that only the higher levels of processing are used. The story content or the text content and its main events, that is, the macrostructure, are usually the main concerns of a reader and these are remembered best (Van Dijk and Kintsch, 1985:806).

Story comprehension can be compared with filling in the empty slots of conventional text schemata and texts for which no specific schemata are available and which are often organised idiosyncratically. It thus seems clear that when recalling a story, a person uses the macrostructure as a retrieval cue, supplementing it with whatever detailed information is available (Van Dijk and Kintsch, 1985:811).

### 3.2.7.1 Instructional implications of the inferential model of reading

The importance of this model for study reading is that it highlights the fact that the type of text to be read and studied, will influence the selection and importance of the processing activities. Students should therefore be made aware that *different types of texts* necessitate *different types of reading*. The most important contribution of this model is the fact that it gives a *description of what happens in the memory*, that is recalling what has been read for study purposes. Texts for which there are for instance no specific schemata available, are organised idiosyncratically, making it difficult to recall and use in an organised way. Ways in which students can be supported if they do not have the necessary schemata when reading a text, will be discussed in **Chapter**

**4** (cf **4.8.3 Comprehension instruction** and **4.8.6 Using access structures to facilitate understanding of the text and study reading**).

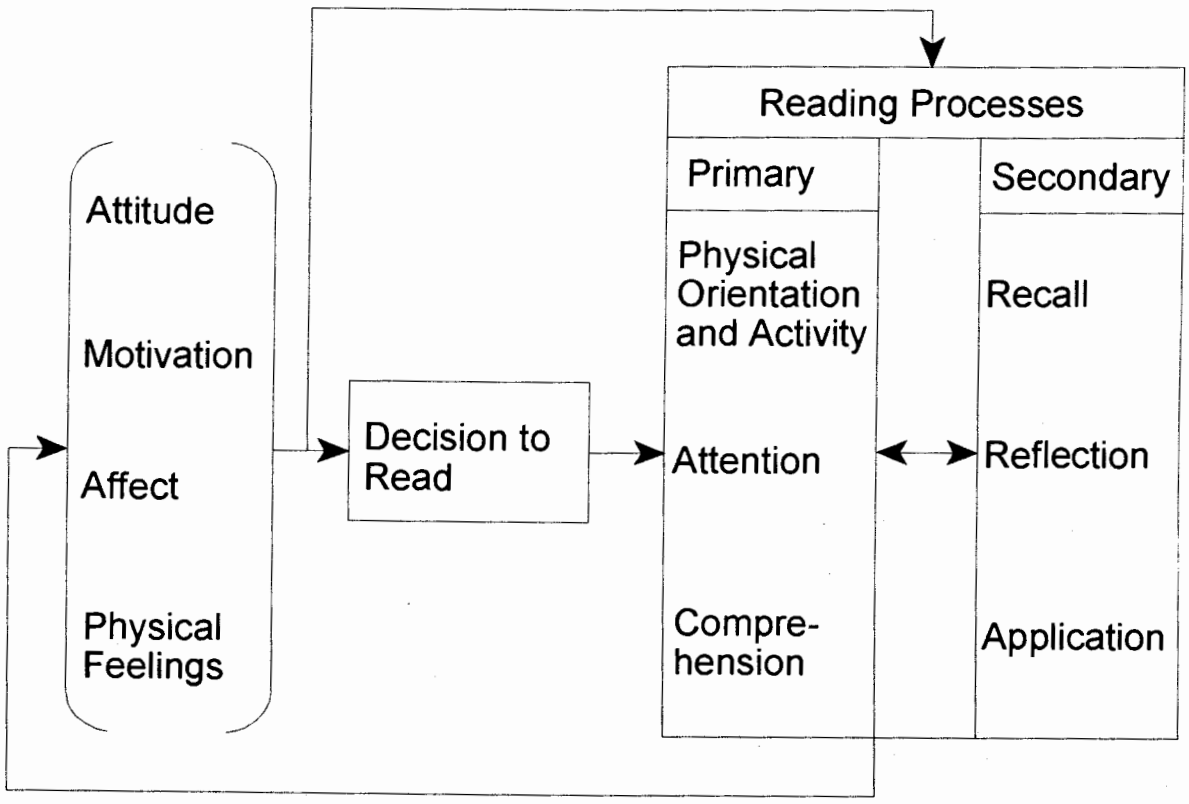
### 3.2.8 The affective model of reading

Ruddell and Speaker (1985) included the influence of affect in their recent interactive reading model, but only in a limited capacity. Mathewson (1985:842-845) was one of the first persons to stress the influence of affective variables in the reading process. He identified four main affective variables, each of which is predicted to influence the reading process. These four variables are: *attitude, motivation, affect and physical feelings. Attitude* can bring about formation and change in a way not usually associated with other affective constructs. Text-specific attitudes include attitudes towards the content, the form and the format. The content or meaning of a book is a primary '*attitude affecting object*', because it may correspond with the reader's motivation and general background, or it may not correspond. As far as *motivation* is concerned, the following motives are considered as being particularly relevant to reading: belongingness and love, curiosity, competence, achievement, esteem, self-actualisation, desires to know and understand and aesthetic motivation. *Affect* should be seen as relatively autonomous. Although affective states continually interact and form parts of attitude and motivation, affective states such as mood and emotion sometimes appear to take on a life of their own. Sometimes *physical feelings* arising from outside sources influence the reading act. It can also be that physical feelings related to the meaning of material itself intrude themselves into the reader's consciousness. In the text-related domain, the content of reading materials sometimes stimulates physical responses such as increases in perspiration, heart rate or muscle tension. There can also be physical feelings not directly related to reading. Examples are cramps from sitting too long in the same position, or eye strain or eye discomfort. Feelings emanating on account of these factors may influence the decision to continue or to discontinue reading (Mathewson, 1985:842-845).

The affective model of reading is best explained by means of the following chart (Mathewson, 1985:846).

**Figure 3.3**

**The affective model of reading**




(Mathewson, 1985:846)

The *decision component* of the model is important, since it influences all the other processes within the model. It influences the *primary reading processes* of physical orientation, attention and comprehension. It also influences the *secondary reading process component including recall, reflection and application.* Remembering information (recall), thinking about it (reflection) and acting upon it (application) are

important activities associated with the primary processes of orientation, attention and comprehension. Although the affective component influences both primary and secondary reading processes through decision making, the model also predicts direct influence of the affective component upon these processes (Mathewson, 1985:846-848).

Attitudes are mobilisers which determine whether a reader will undertake and persevere with a reading task at hand. It has been agreed that affective factors may set cognitive actions in motion and facilitate or hinder cognitive processes in learning from text. As far as reading is concerned, affective factors are dynamically involved with the reading process and are critical to text comprehension (Yopp and Dreher, 1994:289-290). The influence of the affective domain on study reading should, therefore, not be ignored.

### 3.2.8.1 Instructional implications of the affective model of reading

The strong influence of the affective domain on a person's cognitive functioning should always be kept in mind particularly when planning and designing study material for students. Lecturers should ensure that students' motivation for reading is not lecturer-driven, programme-driven or merely assignment-driven, and is thus based on external factors such as recognition, reward, and competition. *Curiosity* and *involvement* which lead to long-term reading interests and pursuits should be encouraged as they in turn lead to long-term motivation (Guthrie, 1996:433).

Students should be guided towards *self-motivation,* therefore lecturers should pay special attention not only to motivation, but to eventual self-motivation. Activating self-motivation which is enhanced by high interest and high involvement, should be a prime objective in the design of tutorial matter (Hunt, 1997:279-280).

The value of reading which can help to foster reading motivation, can be enhanced in various ways by lecturers. A lecturer can act as an explicit *reading model* by being enthusiastic and inculcating a love of reading with students. The role of *choice of reading material,* in general and in reading motivation, is well recognised and should be used in the teaching situation as far as possible. Current theories of motivation recognise that learning is facilitated by social interaction, and students should thus have the opportunities to interact with other students about the texts and books they are reading and studying. Lecturers should always choose books and texts to be read with care, since students' interest in books fosters depth of processing information and enhances learning (Gambrell, 1996:21-22) (cf **4.8.8 Enhancing students' motivation and interest**).

## 3.3 STUDY READING

There are many processes and skills involved in reading to learn or study reading. The process of reading and studying from text is viewed as a criteria-related, self-directed form of reading text. It is a purpose-driven form of reading, unlike reading a novel for entertainment or reading the newspaper to pass the time. It is a form of reading in which specific information must be gained in order to perform well on some future event such as writing examinations (Anderson, 1979:77).

Howard (1985:172) identifies the following four classifications of learner activity associated with effective text reading:

- *setting and maintaining purposes for reading*, for example, instance focusing;
- *persisting with the reading task*, for example, maintaining motivation and concentration;

- *constructing meaning*, for example, elaborating important concepts, conceptualising interrelationships, drawing inferences, developing hypotheses, and
- *comprehension monitoring,* for example, posing questions to monitor comprehension.

All of the above require *metacognitive skills* which are discussed in **3.4.2 (Reading and metacognition**). These learner achievements which form part of study reading, are reflected in the various reading models and theories (cf **3.2.2 The bottom-up and top-down models of reading** to **3.2.8 The affective model of reading**).

In the *substrata-factor theory of reading* the necessity to change one's reading strategy to fit the reading purpose of a given text was indicated. Maintaining motivation and maintaining concentration, form part of the *affective model of reading*, as well as of the *information-processing model of reading* and the *interactive model of reading*. The *inferential model of reading* (in which the schemata necessary for text organisation were indicated) could be linked to construct meaning, such as drawing inferences. According to more recent conceptions of comprehension in reading, *prior knowledge* partly defines the meaning that a reader takes from the text (existing schemata). It is the *interaction* between prior knowledge and incoming information that a reader uses to construct meaning and outcome of this conception of the *interactive model of reading*. Comprehension thus lies at the heart of the *interactive-compensatory model of reading*, as well as of the *information processing model of reading*. This underlines the importance of *comprehension monitoring*.

Two essential themes recur in many research reports on text comprehension and study strategies, namely *prior knowledge* in *reading comprehension* and in studying text, and *metacognition* as a major component in the reading process (Howard, 1985:172). *Prior knowledge* forms part of students' comprehension of reading tasks, and *metacognition*

is an important, if not the most, important umbrella reading strategy which learners should use constantly when studying. Comprehension and the teaching of metacognition are continually referred to in this thesis and will be discussed with two other themes, decoding and purposes for reading (cf **4.8.3 Comprehension instruction** and **4.8.4 Instructing metacognition**).

## 3.4 ESSENTIAL ASPECTS INVOLVED IN STUDY READING

### 3.4.1 Introduction

The various reading models and theories help one to understand the various components and dynamics of reading. In order to understand the essential processes involved in reading and study reading, the following facets of the study reading process will be discussed:

- reading and metacognition;
- reading and comprehension;
- coding and comprehension, and
- setting purposes for reading.

### 3.4.2 Reading and metacognition

Metacognition is an awareness of one's own cognitive functioning, one's own knowledge of language and one's own learning strategies (Hendrix and Hulshof, 1994:23). *Knowing which strategies* to use to construct meaning from text, and *knowing when to use these strategies* to achieve certain aims and objectives of reading, are metacognitive activities (Stewart and Tei, 1983:36-37). Metacognition is thus the ability to reflect on one's own cognitive processes and to be aware of one's own activities while reading or writing (Brown, 1985:502).

Metacognition requires a set of processes to be executed. These processes are called *metacomponents*. For study reading purposes the following metacomponents are vital: *plan, strategy, monitor* and *evaluate*. These metacomponents can be distinguished for the sake of discussion, but they should never be seen as processes that occur in isolation. Students who are reading with the purpose of studying, should be able to: *plan their reading*, *develop reading strategies*, *monitor their comprehension* while reading, and be able to *evaluate the sections that have been read* (Spring, 1985:291).

If persons are reading and studying from text, they should know what to do when they realise that they do not understand what was written. They should thus have knowledge of strategies on how to enhance their comprehension of the text. They should for instance investigate when they do not understand a section of the text. They should be able to find out what exactly it is they do not understand so that they can reread that section of the text or employ compensatory strategies until they understand it, for instance by catching the meaning of a particular word because of the context in which it is written.

### 3.4.2.1 Instructional implications of reading and metacognition

When using active comprehension, students are required to use their metacognitive capacities and thus activate their background knowledge. *Active comprehension* can be attained *by asking questions* and therefore lecturers should guide students in the art of asking questions. It is when asking and seeking answers to their own questions, that students can establish objectives and select appropriate methods to ensure the attainment of these objectives. Thus students could continually monitor their own reading behaviour and learn independently. A second result of active comprehension checking, is the link which is established between new and prior knowledge. When students generate their own questions, the focus of control for learning is situated in

the students and is not merely on external factors (Yopp and Dreher, 1994:288-289). They are therefore empowered to become independent learners.

Students' metacognition can be improved by means of a framework of instruction which facilitates active learning through an affective environment. Various strategies can be devised: to prepare students to read and study; to assist them in the process of learning; and to facilitate them to reflect about what has been learned. Thus students gain knowledge and confidence in the performance of their studies, and it fills them with a sense of accomplishment as they take personal responsibility for the outcomes of their learning (Forget and Morgan 1997:169-170,175). Various strategies which students could use to improve their metacognition while reading and studying, will be dealt with in **4.8.4 Instructing metacognition**.

### 3.4.3 Reading and comprehension

Reading skills are highly routinised - almost automatic - behaviours a reader uses in order to understand what is being read. Strategies are described as conscious and flexible plans a reader applies and adapts to a variety of texts and reading tasks. Comprehension strategies indicate how readers conceive a task, what textual cues they attend to, how they make sense of what they read and what they do when they do not understand. According to recent viewpoints on reading, a good reader is able to construct meaning through the integration of existing and new knowledge, and also uses strategies to foster, monitor, regulate and maintain comprehension flexibly (Dole et al, 1991:242).

The effective use of cognitive reading strategies may enable students to understand their reading matter, which at the same time rewards their choices and acts of reading. Being aware of these reading strategies, and using them frequently and appropriately also seem to enable students to locate books and other reading material that interest

them. It also facilitates comprehension of the material that is important to them (Guthrie, Schafer, Wang and Afflerbach, 1995:22).

Research done by Dole and his co-workers (1991:255-257) in the field of reading comprehension, has indicated that the following four factors are important to ensure that a text is understood. In reading comprehension *intentionality* plays an important role, because reading strategies emphasise intentional and deliberate plans under the control of the reader. Good readers make decisions about what strategy to choose, when to use it and how to adapt it to a particular text. Strategies emphasise *reasoning* which along with critical thinking enables constructing and reconstructing meaning from text. *Flexible and adaptable* strategies are used. Competent readers are therefore able to modify strategies to fit different kinds of texts and different purposes. The ability to devise strategies, implies *metacognitive awareness,* which involves reflection on what they are doing during the reading process. As discussed in the previous section, readers should be aware of whether they understand or do not understand when reading, and if reading does not occur fluently, this awareness can lead to regulation and repair of the reading.

The background knowledge that second language readers bring to a text, is often culture-specific. Second language readers also attempt - as all readers do - to provide schemata to make sense of texts. These efforts quite often fail, because the readers cannot access the appropriate existing schemata or because the readers do not possess the appropriate schemata necessary to understand a text. Second language readers need some language proficiency in order to activate relevant schemata, and they should thus be encouraged to extend their vocabularies in order to gain greater control over complex syntactic structures. However, reading comprehension depends crucially on ESL readers being able to relate information from the text to already existing background knowledge (Carrell and Eisterhold, 1992:81-82).

More needs to be said about the study of second language readers. Researchers in the strategy use of *second language readers* can be divided into two groups (cf **3.5 Reading and studying in English as a second language**). One group of researchers argue that reading ability in a second language is largely a function of proficiency in that language. Language skills develop in a linear progression, moving from lower level letter and vowel recognition skills to higher level cognitive ones. Researchers in the other group argue that higher level strategies developed in a first language can be transferred to a second language and can operate alongside lower processing strategies. There are, however, problems with both these two viewpoints, because a clear view of the reading process of English as a second language is not provided (Block, 1986:466).

The English language proficiency of many school-going learners and many students in South Africa is often not developed sufficiently to give them the ability to use their higher level cognitive abilities when reading, writing or speaking English. In addition their first language abilities are often not developed sufficiently to support English as a second language. Add to this a lack of background experience and knowledge, and it becomes clear why many ESL learners fail to comprehend what they try to read and study.

One of the main reasons for the limited English proficiency among many South African learners is the language ability of the teachers themselves. Quite often teachers lack the basic English proficiency necessary for effective teaching. Both young learners, as well as teachers in the rural areas, often lack sufficient exposure to English in the broader community, and also the opportunity to practise English. As such, English sometimes becomes a foreign language, rather than a second language (Lemmer, 1995:88).

Sometimes teacher training in South Africa does not equip teachers with principles of language acquisition. Many teachers do not have the knowledge and skills to support

English learning or to teach literacy skills in all the school subjects. Many learners in South Africa have a perception that they are being inadequately prepared for their matric examinations by unqualified teachers (Simon, 1991:590). This problem is exacerbated on the tertiary level, as greater demands are made on students' language skills which include reading comprehension and study reading.

#### 3.4.3.1 Instructional implications of reading and comprehension

Lecturers should help students to enhance their reading strategies by devising own intentional and deliberate plans to improve reading comprehension. Students should also be taught how to use reading strategies flexibly to identify different kinds of texts and to use their metacognitive awareness to know when they understand and when they do not understand the text (cf **4.8.3 Comprehension instruction**).

ESL students at tertiary level who have language problems should be supported in as many ways as possible to improve their language. One way to support their reading comprehension skills, is to provide them with the necessary schemata and background knowledge in order to understand the text which they have to read and study. (Cf **3.5 Reading and studying in English as a second language** and relevant sections of **Chapter 4**.)

### 3.4.4 Decoding and comprehension

Reading is not only an interaction between the schemata of the author and the reader; it is also an interaction among the four cue systems: graphophonic, syntactic, semantic and schematic (May, 1994:17).

When one reads, there are four types of cues or clues which confront the reader simultaneously. Three cues derive from the author of the text, and the last cue is from

the reader. These four cues cannot be separated and function highly interactively. In order to be able to comprehend what is being written, all four of these cues must be in tact. May (1994:16-17) elaborates as follows on these four cues:

- *Graphophonic cues:* This is a synonym for what is generally known as phonics. *Grapho* stands for the *written letters* which the reader sees and *phonic* stands for the *spoken language sounds* or *phonemes* that the reader hears. As indicated in **Chapter 1** this aspect will not be investigated in this study.
- *Syntactic cues:* The organisation of the words used in the written text, provides the reader with grammatical cues, which provide a great measure of meaning.
- *Semantic cues:* These clues provide the reader with meaningful information on elements such as who, when, where, what and why as reflected in the text. These cues eventually fit in with the reader's schemata.
- *Schematic cues:* Certain words used by the author associatively trigger memories which in turn lead to the construction of mini-theories on the part of the reader. Without the reader's schemata, the author would never be understood. A reader's schemata (semantic and schematic cues) form part of his or her background knowledge.

Active comprehension can influence the affective dimensions of the reading process. Yopp and Dreher (1994:300) state that when students are taught active comprehension as a process of reading, it positively affects attitudes and motivation. When students find it difficult to comprehend while reading, it might lead to a negative attitude to reading and students might lose interest and their motivation to learn (cf **4.7 The importance of affect in the reading process** and **4.8.8 Enhancing students' motivation and interest**).

#### 3.4.4.1 Instructional implications of decoding and comprehension

Sometimes readers and especially readers with limited English proficiency (LEP) find it difficult to use these schematic cues sufficiently, and therefore they often fail to obtain the full and real meaning from the written text. At school level graphophonic cues or phonics are well taught, but many learners do not have sufficient knowledge to fully utilise the syntactic, semantic and especially the schematic cues. For ESL learners sufficient knowledge of English is necessary, in order to be able to use the last three types of cues effectively when reading and studying.

A special effort should be made at the tertiary level to provide students with the necessary schematic cues in order to enhance their comprehension while reading and studying. This is important since it will also influence the affective dimension of the reading process and help to prevent students from becoming disinterested in their studies and unmotivated to read and study.

Lecturers who are responsible for writing and designing written course material should realise that students could be helped to understand text better, if they are able to make use of syntactic and semantic cues. Special attention should therefore be given to the types of syntactic and semantic cues which could be useful in a text. The input of a linguistic expert could, for instance, be used in this regard. ESL and especially LEP students should be supported by providing background knowledge in order for them to obtain the necessary schematic cues when reading (cf **4.8.6 Using access structures to facilitate understanding of the text and study reading**).

### 3.4.5 Purposes for reading

The setting and maintaining of purposes for reading actually begins prior to the actual reading process, during what is known as the 'pre-reading phase'. Attention has

already been drawn to the extreme importance of purposeful reading in **3.2.3 The substrata-factor theory of reading** and in **3.2.5 The interactive model of reading** in which *purpose for reading* was incorporated as a component of these theories.

Setting purposes for reading, involves gaining awareness through an active search for and consideration of internal and external indicators of one's purposes for reading a specific text. *Internal indicators* may be *interest in the text* and *prior knowledge* about the topic. *External indicators* are for instance criterion-related tasks to be performed by the reader such as tests and time constraints. Sometimes internal and external determinants interact with textual features to form a set of reading purposes. In order to complete certain tasks which might appear in a particular text, a reader will focus on parts of the text. Such focusing involves the use of more time and more cognitive effort in or concentration on certain parts of the text (Howard, 1985:173-174).

Good and poor readers appear to differ in their ability to adapt their purposes for reading according to the tasks given to them. Competent readers can adjust the procedures they use, according to their reading purposes. They usually use a variety of procedures. Poor readers, on the other hand, make only slight variations in their approach when reading for different purposes (Armbruster, Echols and Brown, 1983:10). In **Chapter 4** the difference in purpose between *skimming* (which is a rapid type of reading done to obtain a general idea of a section of a text) and *scanning* (which is a rapid type of reading done to obtain specific information) will for instance be discussed.

When reading text, students tend to start with one of two purposes:

- To focus on the words the author used and to try to remember the key words and phrases: This is referred to as *surface processing* of text at the word/sentence level.

- To understand the author's intended meaning: This is *deep processing* at the semantic content level. This group of students use strategies designed for accurate reproduction and for maximal understanding (Marton, 1975:276).

These two purposes link up with various approaches to learning as discussed in **2.4.7 Approach to learning**. It was pointed out that in the surface approach to learning the motive is to meet minimal institutional requirements and this leads to rote learning. In the deep approach the motive is intrinsic interest and this leads to the discovering of meaning and the acquiring of competence by reading widely.

According to research findings by Samuelowicz (1987:127-129), many students who study through English as a second language, adopt a *reproducing orientation or surface approach* to studying. This reproducing orientation is characterised by the intention on part of the student to memorise material to satisfy external demands, by paying excessive attention to details. Consequently these students lack analytical, integrating and problem solving skills (cf **2.4.7 Approach to learning**).

The phenomenon that text information is more interesting to one group of readers than another, is referred to as *purpose-driven interest*. This view holds that schema-relevant information becomes interesting because it is central to the reader's adopted purpose for reading. It can thus be deduced that different purposes for reading enhance different levels of interest in text information. An important implication is that interest in a text may be changeable via external manipulations under certain conditions. Interest depends on the reader, the text and the interaction between the two. Interest is therefore not a quality that can be defined without regard to the context in which learning or reading occurs. It should, however, also be noted that the degree to which interest is a situated phenomenon, may depend on a variety of factors, including the reader's purpose for reading, as well as other factors such as prior domain knowledge, individual interest and text difficulty (Schraw and Dennison, 1994:13-14).

### 3.4.5.1 Instructional implications of setting purposes for reading

Lecturers should be aware of internal and external determinants which could contribute to students' purposes for reading. Students should also be encouraged to understand the author's intended meaning by using deep processing which leads to accurate reproduction and maximal understanding. The setting of purposes for reading (which require the use of metacognition), interest in a specific text and motivation complement one another. Lecturers should realise that the texts which distance learners have in front of them and from which they have to study, comprise the main forms of subject content information which students have at hand for the duration of their study. Lecturers should thus take note of possible internal and external indicators of purposes for reading and guide students to adapt their purposes for reading according to given tasks. The texts should be designed in such a way that they are purposeful and at the same time retain the interest of the reader (cf **4.8.5 Helping students to set purposes and goals (desired outcomes) for reading**).

## 3.5 READING AND STUDYING IN ENGLISH AS A SECOND LANGUAGE

Quite often South African students studying through the medium of English (or another non-first language) have study problems. It should be remembered that because language difficulties are easy to notice, they often mask other problems such as attention deficits and eye fixations. In South Africa where many students on tertiary level study through medium of English as a second language, language problems which might arise, need to be addressed. When considering reading in a second language, the number of factors influencing reading ability increase exponentially. The influence of a reader's first language and first language literacy, as well as his or her second language proficiency, complicates investigations of second language reading.

Jardine (1986:58) points out that when one considers that for the majority of black people who enter South African universities the language they are exposed to at the academic level is most often a second or a foreign language, it is little wonder that academic staff report linguistic deficits as a major cause of the problems such students experience. Jardine (1986:57-59) referred to the academically vulnerable students in Southern Africa by stating that these students' lack of skills in 'languaging', whether receptive or productive, was often identified as the most serious hindrance to their progress at university. Of all the skills required to study at tertiary level, he places *reading skills first* because they are the most important language skills required for a university degree. One should also remember that reading skills provide the necessary input which precedes written output. If the input is not up to standard, what can be expected from the output?

Research conducted by Block (1986:466) on the reading strategy use by second language readers has indicated two trends. One group of researchers argue that reading ability in a second language is largely a *function of proficiency* in that language. Language skills develop in a linear progression, moving from lower level letter and word recognition skills, to higher level cognitive skills. This viewpoint is in accordance with the bottom-up model of reading (cf **3.2.2**). The other group asserts that *higher level reading strategies developed in a first language can be transferred to a second language* and can thus operate alongside lower level processing strategies.

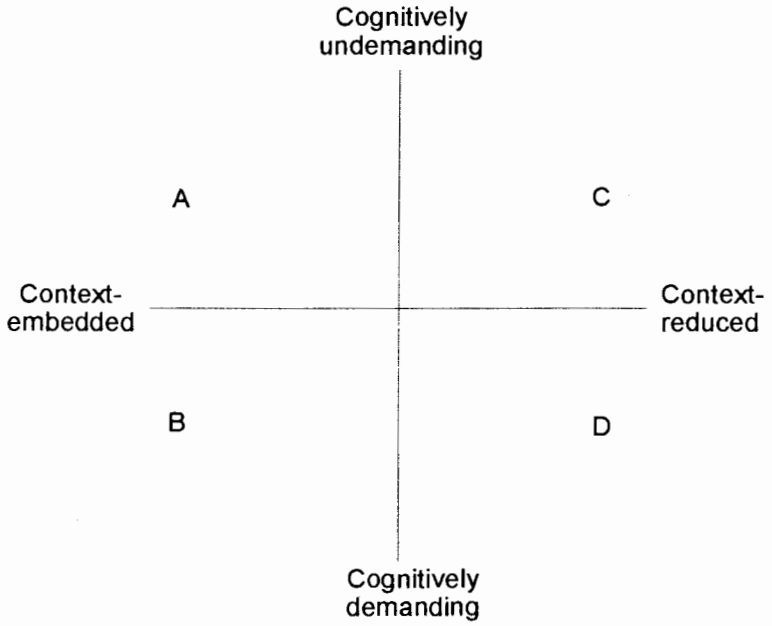
A distinction between the various forms of second language proficiency that exist, is made in **2.8** (**Language proficiency**). As far as academic progress is concerned, a distinction between *BICS* and *CALP* enables a person to distinguish between the information processing demands of engaging in a casual conversation (BICS) and reading or writing a complex expository text (CALP) (Cummins 1994:40). BICS consists of the visible aspects of language such as grammar and basic vocabulary which allow a person to converse fluently in an everyday situation. For academic success CALP is necessary.

It should be noted that LEP sudents may be relatively fluent in English and they may even have passed an admission test which assesses language, but they seldom have sufficient command of English necessary for immediate academic success. In South Africa many LEP learners attend so-called English schools where they are required to use a standard of English which is on a par with English speakers. In this situation LEP learners are faced with a dual educational challenge: mastery of academic content through the medium of English which is not their home language (Barry, 1995:10).

It happens quite often that LEP learners are able to use higher order cognitive skills, such as generalising, arguing, hypothesising in their home languages. But when they are required to carry out these higher order thinking skills in English, they lack the necessary CALP (Barry, 1995:10).

The following figure illustrates how LEP students can encounter problems in the use of their higher order cognitive skills as a result of their inadequate language proficiency.

Figure 3.4
Range of contextual support and degree of cognitive involvement in communicative activities




(Cummins, 1984a:138)

The above figure graphically illustrates the following realities. *Cognitively demanding* text, is text which students have to master and study in academic courses, while *cognitively undemanding text,* relates to everyday conversation which does not necessarily require cognitive input. Cummins (1984a:138-139) states that language proficiency can further be conceptualised along two continuums. The extremes of the continuums are *'context-embedded communication'* and *'context-reduced*

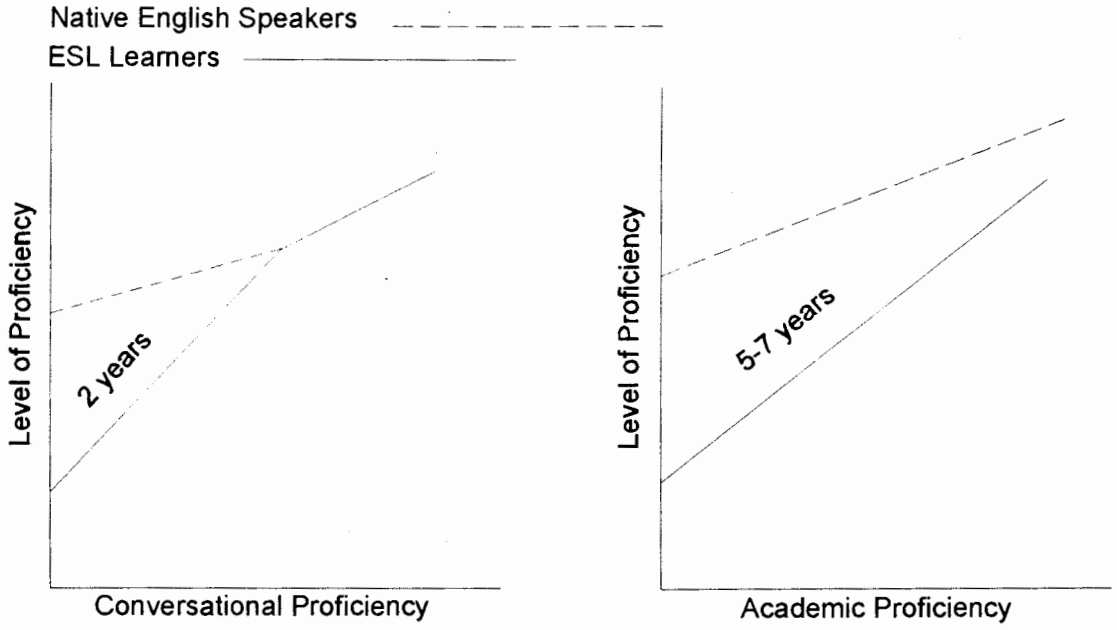
*communication'*. In *context-embedded communication* the participants can actively negotiate meaning, for example, by saying that the message has not been understood and by supporting the language by a wide range of meaningful situational and paralinguistic cues, such as body language. This form of communication is typical of the everyday world outside the classroom. *Context-reduced communication* relies primarily on linguistic cues to meaning. The successful interpretation of the message depends heavily on knowledge of the language itself. Many of the linguistic demands of the lecture hall (and in the case of distance education the study material or tutorial package) require communicative activites which are near to the context-reduced end of the continuum, for example independent study of a prescribed book.

Within this framework provided by Cummins, language proficiency can be seen in terms of the underlying contextual and cognitive dimensions. The skills of quadrant A are classified as *basic interpersonal communicative skills,* or BICS. The skills needed in quadrant D are typical of *cognitive academic language proficiency*, or CALP, where the task is cognitively demanding and context reduced. Persuading a person to your viewpoint is an example of quadrant B skill, while writing an academic essay would fall into quadrant D. Typical university academic skills fall within quadrant D, that is cognitively demanding and context reduced (Starfield, 1992:3).

A further problem facing ESL students is the length of time required to attain conversational and academic proficiency in English. The following figure indicates the length of time required for ESL students to develop proficiency in different aspects of English.

**Figure 3.5**

**Length of time required to achieve age-appropriate levels of conversational and academic communicative proficiency**




(Starfield, 1992:3)

It is evident that the time aspect can definitely influence a student's academic progress, especially when students study at tertiary level which requires CALP.

BICS type skills can develop outside the lecture room, but CALP skills need an academic environment to develop (Starfield, 1992:3). In a research report, Lemmer, Bergh, Van der Linde, Van Niekerk and Van Wyk (1995:54) suggest that even the texts written for post-graduate students should be scrutinised with regard to language requirements, in order to ensure that limited English proficiency students can read them effectively. This underscores the fact that the tutorial matter for undergraduate, as well as post-graduate students should be carefully planned and compiled.

In South Africa, the problems LEP students face, are exacerbated by the fact that in addition to their limited English proficiency, these students often lack sound language skills in their first language. This is the result of a lack of knowledge among parents and teachers about the role of the use of the first language, and the strong bias against the use of the first language among some parents. Quite often children are not allowed sufficient time to develop proficiency in their mother tongue and they are simply forced into a straight English policy at school without simultaneous attention to the maintenance of the mother tongue (Lemmer, 1995:90-91).

### 3.5.1 Instructional implications of reading and studying in English as second language

From the above, a number of learner needs can be deduced. The South African situation demands that both the viewpoints that reading ability in a second language is largely a function of proficiency in that language, as well as that the higher level reading strategies developed in a first language can be transferred to a second language, should be incorporated into the development of courses. This should help students who lack the necessary language skills to make a success of their academic studies. Students should be helped to develop *better language and reading proficiency* in their *first language* and at the same time they should be helped to reach higher levels of competency and comprehension in the language of instruction. The bottom-up and

top-down models of reading, as well as the interactive model of reading, stimulated research on reading and on reading in English as a second language and therefore made valuable contributions in this regard.

Students who have problems with CALP and who have to study academic content which is cognitively demanding and context reduced, should be provided with special support (cf **4.8.3 Comprehension instruction** and **4.8.7 Addressing language related variables and problems in reading**). These students are usually able to use higher order cognitive skills in their first language, but because of a lack of knowledge of English they are not able to use higher order cognitive skills in the academic situation. Provision should also be made for enough time for these students to obtain proficiency in English as their language of instruction.

## 3.6 SYNTHESIS

In this chapter the main focus was on a discussion of study reading skills. Various models and theories of reading were discussed with a view to understanding the process of study reading better and to ascertain what teaching implications the models and theories of reading have for distance education students.

According to the *bottom-up models of reading* it is evident that students must have well developed decoding skills, whereas the *top-down models of reading*, indicate that students should be guided to understand subject-related terminology. The importance of relevant support which should be provided to students and especially ESL students is clear from both these models of reading. In the *substrata-factor theory of reading* the fact that students should know how to change reading strategies in each reading passage according to the purposes for reading was discussed. The *information processing model of reading* stresses the importance of decoding and comprehension in the reading process. Support should be supplied to students in all reading tasks to

enhance their comprehension of unknown words. According to the *interactive model of reading* textual, conversational and instructional features should be used in the text to support readers' comprehension. By using knowledge utilisation and control, readers' goals could be defined. In the *interactive-compensatory model of reading* the relationship between comprehension and the time factor was stressed. This relates to notional time as advocated by *SAQA* and the *Norms and Standards for Educators* document. The fact that different types of text necessitate different types of reading, was a conclusion in the discussion on the *inferential model of reading*. This model further indicated that students should be guided to build necessary background schemata to support their comprehension while reading. The *affective model of reading* stressed the importance of the influence of the affective domain during the reading process.

*Study reading* and four essential aspects involved in study reading, were explained. *How* students could be taught to use their *metacognitive capacities* so as to activate their background knowledge when reading was dealt with. By using *metacognition,* students could be trained to monitor their comprehension while reading. *Reading comprehension* could be taught to students by teaching them to use reading skills flexibly to fit different kinds of texts. The *reading comprehension* of ESL students could also be enhanced by supplying readers with the necessary schemata and background knowledge in order to understand the text which they have read. Students' *decoding and comprehension,* while reading, could inter alia be enhanced by lecturers if students were to be supplied with the types of syntactic and semantic cues which might be needed to understand a text. The importance of *purposes for reading* was stressed, and it was argued that lecturers should be aware of internal and external determinants which could contribute to students' motivation to study.

In the next chapter a discussion on how *subject content* could be presented to distance education students to support their study reading strategies and study reading skills will be provided.

# CHAPTER 4

# DISCLOSURE OF SUBJECT CONTENT TO DISTANCE EDUCATION STUDENTS: READING AND THE ROLE OF LECTURERS

## 4.1 INTRODUCTION

When considering the diversity in the student population (cf **Chapters 1** and **2**) one realises why Luckett (1995:34) is of the opinion that it is the accepted duty of lecturers at tertiary institutions to construct and teach courses in such a way, that they cater for students from a diversity of educational and cultural backgrounds.

In an attempt to be more responsive to the needs of a population of diverse students, lecturers should look critically at the appropriateness of content, assumptions about prior learning, and the explicitness of learning outcomes. Distance education delivery systems allow lecturers to meet the learners literally on their home territories. Lecturers should ask to what extent they can set up learning conditions that, as far as possible, match the learners' individual needs, learning styles and approaches to learning. Staff development with the objective of improving the teaching capacity of staff, should form part of the development programmes of distance education institutions.

People involved in modern distance education, have to take cognisance of the need to develop new organisational forms for distance education, which will satisfy the needs of a changing environment. In the modern environment the focus is on the need for a highly trained, technically skilled and well-educated work force. Distance education institutions will need to be efficient, focussed, committed to learning, and able to effectively reach beyond space and time (Woudstra and Murgatroyd, 1992:43).

It was indicated previously that many students in South Africa are ESL learners with limited proficiency in English. Luckett (1995:34-35) stresses the fact that ESL students who come from educationally disadvantaged backgrounds are increasingly becoming the 'norm' in university classrooms. Gone are the days when curricula could be solely based on a student norm which was historically designed to serve a privileged and homogeneous minority.

Present-day distance education demands a variety of communication and information options which should be utilised to disclose the subject content to students and to assess students' progress. Many options are available and with the growth in technological development more sophisticated options can be used (cf **4.3 Distance education, technology and computers**). Reading is, however, essential even in the use of the most sophisticated technical equipment, and therefore the role which reading plays in the mastering of subject content can never be ignored. The needs of distance education students and the reading strategies required in different subjects, as well as in the assessment procedures, should be integrated into the design of the course material.

Since studying at a distance is a human activity, provision in course design should be made for *interaction with subject content resources*, as well as *interaction with people resources*. In this chapter *various forms of interaction with subject content* will be explored, as well as the *affective needs of distance education students* with reference to study reading, thus enhancing *people resources*.

## 4.2 ADULT LEARNING, COURSE DESIGN AND TEXT DESIGN

### 4.2.1 Introduction

Higher education, including distance education, depends on the *interrelationships* between the *content* being taught, the *needs of the learner*, and *what the institution has to offer*. The content is influenced by considerations such as the level and type of learning outcomes, and whether cognitive or affective learning such as the changing of values, is required. *Learner considerations* include factors such as cognitive processes (cf **2.4 The cognitive domain**), the influence of the environment (cf **2.5 The influence of the student's environment**) and the affective domain (cf **2.6 The affective domain**). *Courses offered* and *course design* are the responsibility of the various higher education institutions. The presentation of courses which are offered, should be well-planned and structured, and should also be in line with the uniqueness and study needs of students.

### 4.2.2 Distance education: adult learning and study reading

Although this chapter deals with the disclosure of subject content and study reading as such, it is impossible to discuss it without paying attention to *learning*. When considering the study skills of all students, it is important that lecturers and instructors should take cognisance of *how students actually learn* and not only *how educators think they should learn*.

Distance education students are likely to be confronted by the following *obstacles to learning*, as compared with average campus-based students. Distance education students have:

- relatively more reading material than campus-based students;
- relatively less study time and more distractions;
- a longer time lapse since their last formal schooling;
- little or no contact with fellow students and limited contact with lecturers, and
- feedback that is delayed and relatively formal (Howard, 1985:171).

Burge (1986:31-35) describes the following four factors which influence adult learners' learning and which should be considered when designing course material, as well as when planning support for study reading for students:

- The *developmental nature of adulthood.* As discussed in **2.3 Individual differences**, adults develop at their own individual stages and lecturers should remember that each person's *development* (including cognitive development) *is unique.*
- *Individuality* which involves the fact that individuals have *personal sets of meanings, knowledge, skills, attitudes and experiences.* Some personal experiences will for instance help students' learning, while other experiences may directly inhibit their learning (cf **2.4.6 Learning experience**). Lecturers should therefore keep it in mind that their students have *complex variations in learning styles* and *approaches to learning* (cf **2.4.4 Learning style** and **2.4.7 Approach to learning**) and therefore lecturers should have flexibility and awareness of such differences in their teaching.
- Students need to *feel in control and to feel that they belong to something and to some people* (cf **2.6.1 Motivation** in this regard). Lecturers can demotivate students or reduce their senses of security and connectedness with significant

others, in many ways. Factors which may influence students, include perpetuating isolation in learning, rejecting the past experience of learners or creating unpredictability in learning.

* The fourth factor concerns *interrelationships,* which is an *umbrella factor linking learner resources and learning processes.* Learners actively interact with themselves, that is with their past experiences and cognitive structures, with significant peers and with significant others who are acknowledged by the educational institutions.

Lecturers have an important responsibility in their support of students' learning and study reading. It is very difficult to lay down universally applicable principles for the teaching of learning and reading strategies generally, but Holmberg (1986:33) suggests the following six strategies which are also applicable to distance education students. Lecturers of distance education should:

- *inspire deep-learning strategies* by suitable types of testing;
- direct students' attention to the *subsumability of new concepts* under wider ones which are already known, and to direct them to understand the *interrelationship of concepts*;
- use *approaches conducive to problem-orientated learning*;
- apply *teaching methods which support individual study and students' own responsibility*;
- present *learning matter in lucid and thought-provoking ways*, and
- *encourage student activity* by including internalised conversations and interaction with study material and with tutors along the lines of guided didactic conversation.

These strategies call for special planning and input on the part of the lecturers. Instruction, including instruction in distance education, should always make provision for the individual learning approaches and learning styles of students. The didactic

principle of *individualisation* should thus be incorporated into the tutorial matter for distance education students. It has al ready been discussed (cf **2.4.7 Approach to learning**) that not all students naturally have a deep approach to learning, and therefore a deep-learning approach should be fostered by lecturers. In doing so, students can be helped to focus on a *problem-orientated approach to learning*. Students should also be helped to *relate new concepts to known concepts.* Cf **3.2.5 The interactive model of reading, 3.2.7 The inferential model of reading**, and **4.8 Distance education lecturers and student study reading**.

Holmberg (1986:31-32) asserts that clarity, readability and forms of presentation which attract interest, all promote students' reading and learning success. Courses should therefore, be presented in a lucid, interesting, thought-provoking and problem-orientated way. He is of the opinion that by *asking relevant questions,* courses could be made more interesting. Questions should be well-thought out and should be directed to force students to think independently, to formulate their thoughts and relate these to the text. Questions should not be radically different from the wordings in texts, but should be instruments to encourage learning and deep-level study (Holmberg, 1986:32). Teaching students to set questions themselves (as a metacognitive reading strategy), will be discussed in **4.8.4 Instructing metacognition**.

When dealing with distance education students, lecturers should pay careful attention to the content of the text and provide students with strategies to interpret the text. A lecturer should fulfil the role of a mediator who helps students to construct understanding when reading. Students should be informed about the reading strategies required in specific subjects or specific kinds of texts. Information about the nature of the reading process and reading strategies which can be used, should thus be included in a student's learning package, irrespective of what form the learning content has (cf **4.8.2 Instructing reading strategies**).

### 4.2.3 Distance education: course and text design

Research on the design of course material and communication in distance education, suggests that the important factors in these two areas are knowledge and understanding of the *environmental and motivational factors* which influence students. These two factors should be programmed into the design of distance education courses. *Knowledge of the many roles* played by most distance education students should influence the way in which course material is designed and in which feedback is given to students. Lecturers should understand the isolated environment in which most distance students work and should include aspects such as time management, independent study skills and pacing aids, in course material. Provision should also be made for the depth of cognitive processing which is required by a task at hand (Phelps, 1991:26-27). Each student should further be seen as a unique person, viewed in the light of differences in culture, occupation, physique, personality, level of development, age, experience, intellectual abilities, adacemic progress, motivation and personal circumstances (Adey et al, 1996:41) (cf **Chapter 2**).

To be able to progress through different levels of learning, that is from facts, concepts, rules or principles to problem solving, students need to participate at different levels of information processing. By manipulating the instructional environment, the designer of learning material can encourage students to act on information in ways that will enable them to process information at levels appropriate for the achievement of different types of learning outcomes. The *content of course material* should therefore be designed in such a way that it progresses from the *factual through to the problem solving stage* (Dwyer, 1991:24-25). Thus students can be guided to adopt a deep and achieving approach to learning (cf **2.4.7 Approach to learning**).

Lecturers should be careful to differentiate between parts of the text which have to be *read as background information* or introduction, and reading material *assigned for*

*detailed study*. A *too-heavy reading load* is likely to cause students to become surface processors in order to get through the amount of reading material (Marland, et al 1990:89).

There are a variety of teaching and learning media available for distance education. All the *media available in ordinary classroom-based courses plus a number of others* can be used in distance education. The role of reading should always be considered when choosing media. Rowntree (1997:98) is of the opinion that '[e]ven with many new *technology-based* media like CD-ROM, multimedia and, especially, *computer conferencing* and the *Internet*, learners spend most of their study time reading'.

Over and above all the information which can be read on technology-based media, the following *types of printed media* which all require to be read, are available (Rowntree, 1992:97):

- already published or specially written books and pamphlets;
- specially written 'wrap around' study guides to already published material;
- specially written self-teaching texts, such as tutorials-in-print;
- workbooks for use along with audiotape or videotape, Computer Based Training, practical work;
- self-tests, project guides, notes of accreditation, requirements and bibliographies;
- maps, charts, photographs and posters;
- material from newspapers, journals and periodicals, and
- handwritten materials passing between learners and lecturer.

In distance education everything a lecturer might have wanted to say to learners working in his or her presence, needs to be thought of and put in writing instead. The writing which is required for self-instruction, is quite different from anything most lecturers will have done previously because it is not like writing notes, manuals,

textbooks, study guides or journal articles (Rowntree, 1990:81). Self-instruction depends on

> ... materials specially written - or at least specially selected and modified - with particular course objectives in mind. Furthermore, they will be structured in such a way that learners can do most, if not all, their learning from the materials alone. The materials must carry out all the functions a teacher or trainer would carry out in the conventional situation - guiding, motivating, intriguing, expounding, explaining, provoking, reminding, asking questions, discussing alternative answers, appraising each learner's progress, giving appropriate remedial or enrichment help ... (Rowntree, 1990:11).

*Self-instruction* as an alternative to different forms of instruction, could also be combined with other forms of teaching in the course content and text provided to students. Lecturers should see to it that the texts which students have to read are both interesting and important, because when text is offered in an interesting way and it is important to the students to learn, it is recalled better and requires less processing attention. Interest in the text and motivation are factors which could influence a distance education student's affective needs.

It is clear that the designing of course material for distance education purposes, is very intricate and it requires expert input from lecturers, as well as from other support services.

### 4.2.4 Distance education: lecturers as persons

The distance education situation is not only influenced by the student, as the learner, and the content which has to be mastered, but the lecturers as persons play a distinctive role. The didactic triad (lecturer-student-content) should be balanced for

effective learning to take place. Distance education and off-campus education failures and impediments could, for instance, be caused by a lack of expertise on the part of the teaching staff.

Quite often distance education lecturers are content experts, but are not able to implement adult learning theories into their lecturing. When teaching distance education students (who are usually mature persons), lecturers sometimes find it difficult to vary or change their existing teaching methods. Lecturers involved in distance education should, however, know that more effective learning by distance education students, could be attained by the acknowledgement of adult needs and characteristics. They should incorporate such needs into both course and subject designs and into the delivery system of distance education (Hough, 1984:18-19,21).

A study of lecturers of distance education students exhibit wide variations in maturity. It is also clear that they are (like all lecturers) beset by the need for power and control. Many lecturers are conditioned by their backgrounds, and they tend to work only in authoritative modes. Quite often they are ignorant of other styles of working with adult learners and they are psychologically unprepared to give up what they regard as leadership and control. They find it *difficult to accept the adulthood* of their respective adult learners, that is the adulthood of the more mature students registered at distacne education institutions (Burge, 1988:12-13).

Lecturers should be able to accommodate the *laid-down demands of a course* such as that required by the subject discipline, the professional judgement of other lecturing staff, the institutional regulations and the *more subtle demands of the students* based on their relationship with a lecturer and on what they currently understand about the world. They should develop the ability to show respect, sensivity and warmth to the learners as adults. In their facilitation of adult learning, lecturers should strive to adopt a learner-centred view. It is true that distance education democratises access to

learning, but it should also democratise the processes of learning and the assessment of learning outcomes (Burge, 1986:13&26).

It is essential that lecturers should care for their students and be able to assess the *learning needs of their students*. Lecturers should know *who their students are* and *what their strengths and weaknesses are*. They should especially know what is conducive to students' language development. It should be noted that lecturers' decisions about how to teach, similar to students' decisions about how to learn, are the products of prior knowledge and executive control (Dreyer, 1995:289-290).

In all academic situations, student support should be built into the various forms of interaction which exist. Interaction can be between student and student, between student and faculty or academic department, and between student and lecturer. There are varying degrees and types of interaction, but lecturers always serve as facilitators of interaction. Lecturers involved in distance education should determine by, for instance, using a questionnaire (cf **2.1 Introduction**), to determine what type of interaction is desired by their students, as the correct interaction might help students' motivation levels.

The learner support given to students, differs according to the type of technology used by the distance education institution. It appears that when institutions rely on *correspondence, interaction with the lecturers* is relatively more important to students and the availability of interaction may be a critical factor in determining the quality of learner support. At institutions relying on second generation technologies, i.e. *teleconferencing technologies*, it appears that *technical support and libraries* are critical factors. In this case the quality of the interaction which are already available appears to be critical to learner support (Dillon and Blanchard, 1992:21).

Study strategy elements which contribute to *academic success* can be divided into two very general categories. *Primary strategies* are used to identify, understand, remember

and apply important subject matter. *Secondary or support strategies* involve the formation of attitudes related to studying and academic performance. These *secondary strategies* are related to *academic self-concept, commitment or motivation to learn, time management, positive expectations of success and anxiety reduction* (Bernt & Bugbee, 1993:97-98). Lecturers do not have much control over the primary strategies, but can adapt their instruction in such a way that it would enhance students' attitudes towards studying and academic performance. Thus a positive form of support to students could be developed.

Studying at a distance can be lonely and therefore many distance education students feel the *need of greater interpersonal communication* with their lecturers. Perhaps lecturers should see their lecturing role as part of the general formative and supportive educating role which is advocated in Curriculum 2005. They should optimise their role in shaping the future of South Africa '... by adopting a positive attitude and creating the climate and conditions which will bring about a successful outcome' (*Building a brighter future Curriculum 2005,* 1997:16).

## 4.3 DISTANCE EDUCATION, TECHNOLOGY AND COMPUTERS

### 4.3.1 Introduction

Similar to the technological innovations developed by Thomas Edison over a century ago, recent advances in technology have changed the lives of many people and have transformed society in many ways. Such changes have revolutionised education at all levels of the teaching and learning process. These changes present the opportunity for improved delivery of instruction. Lecturers should therefore take cognisance of all new developments in the field of technology (Myers, Miels, Ford and Burke, 1997:98).

The explosion of instructional technologies is changing the way in which academics will teach in future. Collaboration with librarians will become essential in the future. Librarians are experts on using the increasingly complex resource technologies and students will need the skills and expertise of both lecturers and librarians (Du Preez, 1999:1).

Conventional teaching consists of the students meeting regularly in classes and much of their learning is done face-to-face with a lecturer or instructor. Although on-campus students spend a considerable amount of time learning on their own, they use materials, such as books, printed notes or magazines which *already exist*. The lecturers do not structure this side of their studies. For distance education students their *private study materials are created especially for them*, with their needs and the particular needs resulting from the courses in mind (Rowntree, 1990:11).

Because of its nature, distance education is very dependent on technology. Technology can link a lecturer and students in various geographic locations and in various units of time. Distance education has gone through *three generations of technologies.* First generation technologies use mainly correspondence communication. This technology uses non-simultaneous communication and is processed through a mail system. The second generation technologies comprise both audio and video teleconferencing systems. It provides the opportunity for instant simultaneous communications among individuals and groups. The use of microcomputers forms the third generation technology and provides for both simultaneous and non-simultaneous instant communications between individuals and groups (Dillon and Blanchard, 1992:21).

Lecturers should appraise new media sympathetically, but also critically. They should focus on how learners could benefit from the media. Choosing the *appropriate technology,* usually a combination of media, should be the main issue (Rowntree, 1997:112). This viewpoint is underscored by Burge (1986:35). He states that

regardless of what type of technology is used, it is important that learners and especially distance education learners should be met on their own ground, and that the disfunctional impact of red tape or of high technology should be reduced. The *simplest, most efficient, and most accessible technologies* which are *appropriate for the tasks* and in line with the various learning styles of the students (cf **2.4.4 Learning style**), should be used.

Instruction in distance education could be synchronous or asynchronous. *Synchronous instruction* occurs when students and the lecturer or instructor meet at the same time but not in the same place, for example if they communicate with each other electronically. Such an approach is usually television-based. More and more on-campus universities in South Africa, for example the Universities of Stellenbosch, Pretoria and Potchefstroom, have recently introduced television-based distance education, sometimes referred to as telematic instruction. *Asynchronous instruction* is not based upon a fixed unit of time and the crux of this type of instruction is interactive communication. Asynchronous instruction does not make provision for immediate feedback to students. Therefore special provision should be made for feedback, encouragement and motivation, especially with a view to enhancing extrinsic factors which may influence students' motivation. These factors are under the control of the lecturer (cf **2.6.1 Motivation and 4.8.8 Enhancing students' motivation and interest**).

No one teaching methodology is appropriate for all students at all times. Therefore there is room for conventional instruction, as well as for technology in tertiary education (Cartwright, 1994:31-32). We live, however, in a world where both traditional and newer forms of literacy prevail. For this reason it is important to teach students skills both within the traditional, as well as in the electronic worlds in which they read, write and eventually study (Leu and Iannone, 1998:443). As modern man moves forward in the information age, strategies for learning from various types of text will play an

increasingly important role. Content reading instruction should be designed not only for printed materials, but also for other technological sources (Lapp, Flood and Martin, 1998:705).

Reading skills required to read information in the first and third generation technologies, may differ from study reading skills because students must have access to information and be able to comprehend the information before they can actually study. The role of reading and computers will be discussed further below (cf **4.3.3 Reading and computers**).

In overseas countries such as the United Kingdom, Germany, the Netherlands and the United States of America, many projects regarding on-line computer facilities on tertiary level are currently being undertaken. There is for instance an electronic university based in San Francisco which offers a complete MBA degree, which is taught entirely by means of computer communication. Many other universities offer on-line computer facilities as part of their studies (Kotze, 1990:110-111).

In South Africa there is also a trend to incorporate computer facilities in tertiary education. The University of South Africa , for instance, introduced a Students On-Line (SOL) system in 1998. It is a free service offered to all registered students and gives them access to administrative and academic services via the Internet. Many students participated in discussion forums on the use of SOL, and students are encouraged to become users (Smit, 1999:18).

As the world moves forward deeper into the information era, strategies for learning from various types of text will play an increasingly important role in teaching and learning and in our conceptualisation of what it means to be fully literate. It should, however, be remembered that even the newest information technology cannot be operated without knowledge of the written word, and without *appropriate reading skills*. The use

of the World-Wide Web requires specific and well-developed reading abilities. Du Preez (1999:1) avers that Web pages provided by academics and librarians cannot, by themselves, equip students with critical reading skills. Such sites just make it easier for students to *find material* which academics value. Two problems arise when considering computers in distance education. The one is that *content reading instruction*, drawn not only from printed material but also from other technological sources, has to be enhanced (Lapp et al, 1998:705). The other is the *cost factor*. Experience at the Open University has shown that computer teaching such as Computer-Assisted Learning (CAL) and Computer-Based Training (CBT) can be very time consuming and therefore expensive. It requires between two and four months of professional time to produce a CAL or CBT exercise that will engage learners of varied ability for one hour. Producing a computer-based interactive video is even more time-consuming (Rowntree, 1990:261).

Literacy has never been static: It continually changes in different historical, cultural, and technological contexts. To prepare students for their futures, they will have to be taught to have access to and to be able to read the Internet and all future technologies (Leu, 1997:62). The question which arises is: who will be responsible to teach students how to access new forms of technology? This could eventually become part of a lecturer's instructional task.

Many students in South Africa do not yet have access to the use of computers, but the possiblity that more and more students in South Africa will be required to access computers in future is certain. Therefore the necessary skills to be able to read technological devices, will have to be taught to students and they will have to master these skills.

### 4.3.2 Computers and interactive communication

Distance education is a special form of education and comprises more than a passive transmission of academic information. Changes in students' life styles and demographic situations ask for alternative modes, places and times of instruction, but interaction and especially interactive communication should always be sought. Technology which allows for interaction, could be one of the vital links between lecturer and student (Cartwright, 1994:30-31).

For proper interactive communication to take place, diversity should be catered for. The reason for this is the heterogeneity in the student population, the differences in learning styles and learning approaches of students (cf **Chapter 2**) and different teaching styles of lecturers.

Computer-mediated communication allows the establishment of an electronic classroom, accessible to students and lecturers separated from each other, by both physical distance as well as time (Wells, 1991:24). The communication technologies of computer-based instruction and computer conferencing could be integrated into course design. This allows for various forms of communication. Thus the learning and studying needs of students at different levels of complexity, such as for example knowledge, comprehension, analysis and synthesis could be served (Moore, 1991:26). In computer-mediated communication it is suggested that there should be a direct relationship between the complexity of an educational task and the form of the instruction.

Many distance education students feel the need and importance of effective interpersonal communication between them and their lecturers. When lecturers are trained, focus should not only be on the use of particular media which could be employed, but the whole communication process should be emphasised. Lecturers

should thus be encouraged to play a more active role in communicating with their students, the learners studying at a distance (Dillon, Gunawardena and Parker, 1992:43). It is clear that lecturers should not see themselves as transmitters of knowledge only, thereby only addressing and supporting the cognitive development of their students. *The affective needs* of students should also be addressed in the communication between them and their lecturers (cf **4.8.8 Enhancing students' motivation and interest**).

### 4.3.3 Reading and computers

Students using computers for study have to be both literate and technically competent (Rickelman and Henk, 1990:419). The print on the screen of a computer can be used in many ways to make the text *more accessible, clearer and interesting* to readers and especially learners. The sentences or paragraphs of a given text can for instance be rearranged to form a new sequence which learners, individually or in a group, might find clearer. Subtitles, subheadings and internal numbering of points can be inserted. Definitions of difficult and unfamiliar words can be inserted in brackets. This might for instance be very helpful to ESL students with limited proficiency in English, or students embarking on studying in a subject which they have never studied before. Questions, comments and other forms of reader feedback can be inserted anywhere in the text. Readers' interpolations could be written in capital letters or perhaps in bold to distinguish it from the original text. The use of text on a personal computer has the advantage that one can experiment with a variety of conventions, either suggested by the lecturer or preferrably invented by the learners. Those conventions which don't seem to work, without permanently affecting the readability of the text, could later be discarded (Bernhardt, 1994:459-462).

## 4.4 READING IN THE SUBJECT CONTENT AREAS

### 4.4.1 Introduction

Growth and development of reading skills should be a lifelong process. The ability to make a transition from learning to read, to reading to learn, should already be fostered in the intermediate school phase (grades four to six) and in the senior school phase (grades seven to nine). Frequently students have not been given adequate instruction on how to read and study in the various learning areas they study. Therefore reading the content of the various disciplines for which they have enrolled, poses a problem to many students (Bonds and Sida, 1993:7). In **Chapter 1** it was indicated from research that some first-year students upon entering tertiary education, read only at a grade one or a grade two level.

Lecturers are often only concerned about compiling a text containing the desired content. The way in which students view, read and eventually study the text, is not always taken into consideration. Print remains the chief medium for teaching and learning at tertiary level and therefore the role of well-developed reading strategies leading to reading skills, should be investigated.

### 4.4.2 Problems experienced by students when reading academic content

It was discussed in **1.1.1** (**Language related issues and subsequent reading problems**) that many matriculants in South Africa enter tertiary institutions, lacking the *basic academic skills* they need in order to stand a reasonable chance of success in first-year courses. Dreyer (1995:285) mentions the following as *basic academic skills* which a student at tertiary level should possess in order to master academic content:

- critical thinking;
- the ability to collect and process information of all sorts;
- the organisation of time;
- the identification of main ideas, and
- the ability to work well with others.

The ability to collect and process information of all kinds, as well as the identification of main ideas, requires well-developed reading skills.

Many students at tertiary level have not mastered the necessary pre-university reading skills to help them to make a success of their academic programmes. It is necessary that lecturers should be able to diagnose students' problems in coping with increasing levels of complexity in reading (Gräbe, 1987:229-230).

It can be accepted that many South African students at tertiary level lack the *basic academic skills* which Dreyer refers to. In a study done at the University of Natal , for instance, first-year students who were predominantly second language English speakers from educationally disadvantaged backgrounds, indicated that they experienced many reading problems. Because of the reading difficulties which the students experienced, they took very long to complete their reading assignments (Luckett, 1995:35-37). The indicated reading problems include:

- *Technical difficulties*: Students indicate that they have difficulties to select books from their reading lists. They often attempt to read books which are linguistically and conceptually too difficult. The reason for this may be that they lack the technical skills to enable them to use a book efficiently. These skills are, for example, skimming and scanning, the use of indexes and tables of content.

- *Vocabulary difficulties*: A lack of vocabulary is one of the greatest obstacles in reading comprehension. The main reason is the phenomenon that a word has (semantically) a variety of meanings which cluster around the concept. These meanings interact with a reader's contextual and background knowledge during a specific reading task. In academic writing where everyday words can become subject specific terms, which carry a single or particular meaning, readers without the appropriate background knowledge may experience decoding difficulties.

- *Syntactical difficulties*: Academic reading material tends to have many interrupting constructions such as the heavy use of subordinate clauses, left-hand extensions of a phrase, frequent use of parentheses and lengthy footnotes. Students indicate that they prefer to read simple subject-verb-object or actor-action-object constructions. Vocabulary difficulties and syntactical difficulties are directly related to **3.4.4 Decoding and comprehension**, where it was indicated that syntactical cues, semantic cues and schematic cues, as well as graphophonic cues are necessary for decoding and comprehension in reading.

- *Difficulties in cohesion*: Cohesion is the linguistic means whereby a text is able to function as a single meaningful unit. This relates to bottom-up reading skills (cf **3.2.2 The bottom-up and top-down models of reading**). The research conducted by the University of Natal also indicated that students often miss linguistic cues which indicate and establish links and relations between the different elements in texts. This causes them to miss the organisational and hierarchical structure of the text. This inability to identify the logical relationships within a text means that many students perceive all the information in a text as of equal importance, and quite often they then simply copy large chunks verbatim from the text. This also relates to the phenomenon in **3.2.6**

**The interactive-compensatory model of reading** in which comprehension and the time factor are discussed. Because of difficulties with cohesion, students may regard all the information in a text as equally important or on the same level. This causes them to spend too much time reading and studying less important text parts.

- *Difficulties in coherence*: A reader has to use his or her background knowledge to construct meaning from the text. This relates to the top-down reading models (cf **3.2.2 The bottom-up and top-down models of reading**). Background knowledge is often culturally and class-specific and when a student lacks this, he or she is forced into fairly meaningless surface level processing of text. It has been established by research that some of the students are unaware of authors' intentions and assumptions and they appear to be unable to situate texts within a larger context. Such students are unable to negotiate the authors' meanings from a critical or oppositional position.

Quite often students only rely on passive approaches to learning such as rereading and memorising information word-for-word. They are at a loss when they have to engage in higher level thinking tasks, for example when they need to synthesise information across multiple texts or when they need to apply concepts to new situations (Simpson, 1995:296). In research conducted with post-graduate students (BEd) at the University of South Africa, it was found that most participants *did not apply a multiple approach when reading text*. They simply tried to memorise content, and made no attempt to skimread in order to first obtain a general overview (Lemmer et al, 1995:3-4).

The *lack of necessary background knowledge* (that is difficulty in coherence) and the *foreignness of academic texts* with no equivalents in students' own languages (that is vocabulary difficulties) are also mentioned by Jardine (1986:60) as factors which cause many students at tertiary institutions in South Africa to read at a level well below that

required of them. Another impediment causing many students to experience problems with their studies, is that they cannot read at an *adequate speed* and still make sense of what they are reading. This is because speed reading is usually not taught in ordinary course material.

From this profile of reading problems experienced by students, it is clear that many students are not prepared for the independent reading which is required at tertiary level. How to provide support for such students is discussed below (cf **4.8.7 Addressing language related variables and problems in reading**). Lecturers at tertiary institutions and especially lecturers at distance education tertiary institutions, should pre-empt reading problems which students might experience in their course design.

### 4.4.3 Content-based reading in the subject content with reference to ESL students

Many students studying at tertiary level could benefit from programmes designed to develop strategies to read specific content (Reynolds and Werner, 1994:272).

When progressing from developmental reading in junior school classes to content area reading in senior classes in the school, learners often have difficulty making the transition to successful content area reading and comprehension. Quite often learners have not been given adequate instruction in *how to read and retain content information* by active comprehension strategies. When entering tertiary level, some students, therefore, still experience difficulty reading specific content. Continued growth in reading skills should indeed be a lifelong process (Bonds and Sida, 1993:7). This view is in line with the new education policy in South Africa, viz lifelong learning.

Students often do not possess post-reading strategies guiding them to know when they understand concepts, and to know how to synthesise information across multiple texts, or to know how to apply concepts to new situations. They simply rely on passive approaches such as *rereading* and *memorising* information word for word (Simpson, 1995:296). This problem was identified as one of the sub-problems of this study (cf **1.2.1 Background to the problem**).

Reading and studying from textbooks in various subjects is an essential and most difficult, context-reduced and cognitively demanding task that many ESL students regularly experience. When these students study by means of distance education and do not have the opportunity to be guided and helped by lecturers and tutors, their language and reading problems increase. In any assignment, especially those more cognitively demanding tasks such as reading for specific content, the difficulties experienced by ESL readers are related to the following three variables: *linguistic variables, knowledge variables and literacy variables.* Difficulties related to these variables might increase students' level of frustration when they read (Kang, 1994:647). (For more on these three variables cf **4.8.7 Addressing language related variables and problems in reading**.)

The use of *holistic reading strategies* is widely accepted as the most efficient way to develop and enhance effective second language usage. This approach recognises the integrated nature of second language learning and the fact that it is important to combine it with meaningful content. In *The Language of Science,* Orr and Schutte advocate a holistic approach when teaching language and science. In this book an interdisciplinary and co-operative attempt is made to teach apparent polarities, namely language (especially those for whom English is not a first language) and science (Orr and Schutte, 1992:v).

The *holistic approach to content-based reading* is also endorsed by Kasper (1994a:23-24) who recommends a number of general guidelines for lecturers which can facilitate in the challenge of developing a content-based ESL reading course. Lecturers should:

- see to it that a course is flexible and modified from time to time if necessary;
- choose materials appropriate to the level and interests of the students. Materials should be challenging but not frustrating;
- use a variety of reading materials to expose students to various styles of writing and to the vocabulary of different fields. Academic textbook chapters, magazine and journal articles, and books from specific fields should be included where appropriate;
- develop activities which integrate and reinforce the four basic language skills - listening, speaking, reading and writing;
- vary activities to maintain interest, and
- consolidate subject matter with extending activities, for example integrate video and other media into the class whenever possible.

Difficult vocabulary concepts could be embedded within specific illustrative contexts to enable students to understand these words (Blake & Majors, 1995:132-133). ESL students will also benefit from the inclusion of various explicit, comprehension-fostering metacognitive strategies in their reading programmes (Carrell, Pharis and Loberto, 1989:669) (cf **4.8.3 Comprehension instruction**).

### 4.4.4 Assessment and ESL students' reading

Students, especially ESL students with low English proficiency, often experience difficulty when they have to read and understand their *examination questions*. If subject related vocabulary has not been dealt with sufficiently during tuition some ESL students will experience difficulty when they are assessed. Lecturers should keep this possibility

in mind when setting examination papers, and be at pains to prevent students being confronted with unknown vocabulary in the examination paper. Eventhough students may know content well, they may nevertheless have difficulty understanding what is actually asked in tests, assignments or in the examinations if they are confronted by strange terminology or formulation.

The readability of the text is, however, not only influenced by the subject related vocabulary, but also by the *lexical knowledge* of the readers. Lexical knowledge is not only influenced by subject specific vocabulary to be found in subjects such as mathematics or geography, but words that do not specifically relate to the subject being examined. The more unknown lexical items in a question, the more difficult it will be for students to understand that question. If an examination paper contains grammatical constructions which candidates do not know, which are too complex or ambiguous they will have difficulty in making sense of what they are reading (Barkhuizen, 1995:111-112).

Background knowledge is activated when students read examination papers, since in order to understand words, sentences and longer passages, more than just linguistic knowledge is involved. In this process background or schematic knowledge is activated to enable understanding of a text. A student's understanding of an examination paper is greatly enhanced when the paper can be matched to existing background knowledge or schemata (Barkhuizen, 1995:116). Contextualisation is thus important.

The assessment load should be realistic and not cause students to attend to assessment matters only, as assessment activities should be designed to optimise interaction with the text. Reading and assessment loads have to be considered conjointly (Marland et al, 1990:89).

Assessment procedures and the setting of examination papers are in the hands of lecturers. They should take cognisance of all the possible reading problems which students, and especially ESL students, could face when they read questions for any type of assessment. One such reading problem is too little time because often ESL readers read more slowly. Spady (1994:36) avers that the paradigm which underlies Outcomes-Based Education, is not *time* or *calender-defined*, but rather Outcome-Based. Learners should thus not be penalised by a shortage of time, but should be given enough time to demonstrate their understanding. This is endorsed by *Norms and Standards for Educators* (Department of Education,1998a:113) which advocates that educators should minimise constraints to success such as time limits (cf **3.2.6.1 Instructional implications of the interactive-compensatory model of reading**). The issue of time, will therefore have to be addressed in all types of assessment done in South Africa in the future.

## 4.5 THE IMPORTANCE OF READING COMPREHENSION

It should be remembered that reading comprehension is closely connected to metacognition in reading. These two important facets of the reading process are only distinguished for purposes of discussion, but comprehension monitoring and metacognitive awareness should not be considered as separate human skills which function on their own. Comprehension lies at the heart of all reading and of most reading theories, for example the information processing model, the interactive model of reading, the interactive-compensatory model of reading and the inferential model of reading, and was discussed in **3.4.3 Reading and comprehension** and in **3.4.4 Decoding and comprehension**. Comprehension *monitoring* is also a very important element of learning and studying and was discussed in **3.4.3 Reading and comprehension**. Reading comprehension depends on a number of learned abilities,

from the more specific strategies to the more general (cf **4.8.3 Comprehension instruction**).

It was already indicated (cf **3.4.3 Reading and comprehension**) that the background knowledge influences reading comprehension. For all readers, and especially ESL readers with limited English proficiency, this might pose difficulties, since background knowledge or content is usually culture specific or subject specific. Therefore they might not be able to access the relevant existing schemata, or they do not possess the appropriate schemata necessary to understand a text. Lecturers should therefore take special care to provide all the necessary content schemata which readers might require in order to understand a particular text.

Students should for instance be encouraged to become self-regulators of their reading comprehension and to set aims and objectives for reading comprehension. Reading comprehension can be enhanced by pertinently teaching students certain comprehension criteria (cf **4.8.3 Comprehension instruction** below).

## 4.6 THE IMPORTANCE OF METACOGNITION IN THE READING PROCESS

It is necessary to distinguish between two types of metacognitive knowledge in order to understand the *relationship between reading and metacognition*. The *first type* is *knowledge about cognition*. Here the focus is on the knowledge readers have about their own cognitive resources. This form of self-knowledge is relatively stable and is acquired later on in life. The *second type of metacognitive knowledge* is *regulation of cognition*. It consists of processes which are relatively unstable, rarely definable, could not be done without considerable effort, and which are relatively age independent. It consists of self-regulatory mechanisms during an on-going process to solve problems.

These indices of metacognition include *planning* one's next move, *checking* the outcome of any strategies one might use, *monitoring* the effectiveness of any attempted action, *testing, revising* and *evaluating* one's strategies for learning and reading (Brown,1985:501-502).

Experienced readers monitor their comprehension and evaluate their own progess in the light of the purposes for which they are reading. Many of these metacognitive processes eventually become automatic. Less experienced and often unsuccessful students are much less aware of the need to be strategic, to plan ahead, to monitor and to check their own understanding. They have not yet learned how to learn effectively from text (Brown, 1985:502).

As far as distance education students are concerned, they are very dependent on well-developed reading skills and should surely be guided to become familiar with the value and the use of metacognition.

Although metacognition deals with a person's cognition, the important influence of the affective domain should also be considered during metacognitive processes. According to Harrison (1990:35&39) metacognition and motivation are inseparable constructs. Motivation and metacognition should be present in teaching to facilitate the learning processes of students.

## 4.7 THE IMPORTANCE OF AFFECT IN THE READING PROCESS

It was mentioned in **3.2.8.1 Instructional implications of the affective model of reading** that *activating motivation* is *enhanced by high interest*, and motivation should thus be a prime objective in the design of tutorial matter.

Motivation should never be seen in isolation, but as an integrated part of a student's learning profile and learning process. The motivational aspect of learning is perhaps the least permanent. It might represent a person's cognitive style and the eventual formulation of a learning strategy. An ideal construct reflecting individual cognitive, behavioural and affective differences combining to form a person's learning style, still has to be researched and formulated (Rayner and Riding, 1997:23).

Affective factors play an important part in studying and reading comprehension by facilitating or hindering cognitive processes taking place when learning from text. The relationship between affect and cognition is most likely one of mutual facilitation (Yopp and Dreher, 1994:299). Stable affect is a prerequisite for effective cognitive functioning and cognitive rationalisation can stabilise affect.

Some researchers refer to the affective factors as 'affective mobilisers'. These affective mobilisers, like cognitive strategies, are a part of a person's repertoire of abilities and may be used at any stage during an ongoing activity. The content of these mobilisers and the timing and mode of their operation in the course of reading is, however, still a matter of debate (Athey, 1985:528). For instructional purposes, cognisance should always be taken of the influence of affective factors in the reading process and provision should be made to use the affective factors positively and optimally.

Tuckman (1991:170-172) conducted research on factors influencing students' motivation. He indicated that the following five factors are important external factors which can influence a student's motivation:

- *Magnitude or openendedness of the task:* Assignments should be kept smaller because a number of short papers may yield more productive work.
- *Informational feedback:* When students are told where they stand relative to others or to the lecturer's expectations, it causes the students to engage in more self-regulated performance. Students with low self-confidence use this information to convince themselves that they are close enough to a payoff to work for it. Lecturers should therefore make their expectations of students' performance clear, and they should let students know where they stand relative to those expectations.
- *Setting goals:* When they set goals which are near and attainable for themselves, students with low self-confidence can definitely be helped. Students should learn to break down longterm goals into manageable chunks of learning.
- *Encouraging feedback:* This kind of feedback tells students qualitively how well they are doing. This feedback should therefore always be positive and never negative or critical. Encouraging feedback can help to increase students' performance. Students relate well to a 'sandwich' of feedback, where the negative citicism is sandwiched between two positive statements.
- *Nature of the performance criteria:* Performance criteria can be normative,that is relative to others or absolute,that is preset in terms of criteria. Students with low self-confidence tend to work harder when the standards of performance are preset, that is in terms of observable criteria, while students with average self-confidence work harder when the standards are relative.

Promoting students' interest in the text to be studied, has motivational purposes. The connection between purpose for reading and interest in reading was discussed in **3.4.5** (**Purposes for reading**). It was indicated that different purposes for reading enhance the interest of text information. Interest in a text may also be changeable via external manipulations under certain conditions, and may depend on a variety of factors,

including purpose for reading, prior knowledge, individual interest and text difficulty. Clarity, readability and forms of presentation which attract interest, all promote students' study reading success. Course material should therefore be presented in a lucid, interesting, thought-provoking and problem-oriented way.

## 4.8 DISTANCE EDUCATION LECTURERS AND STUDENT STUDY READING

### 4.8.1 Introduction

Reading is a human activity and therefore provides the opportunity for people to interact socially with other people, by means of direct communication and social collaboration, which can promote achievement, higher levels of cognition and the intrinsic desire to read. Current theories of motivation also recognise that learning is facilitated by social interaction with others (Gambrell, 1996:22). Unfortunately, distance education students do not have the opportunity to interact socially on a regular basis, and therefore care should be taken to support students in achieving higher levels of cognition, to promote their motivation and to improve their reading abilities in less social context. Distance education students would probably rely more heavily on reading for study purposes than residential students, and therefore various forms of reading support and especially study reading support should be included in their reading material.

Certain logical steps could be followed to improve the reading and writing skills of distance education students:

- *careful selection* of prescribed material in order to ensure a *systematic exposition* of the subject material;
- *effective clarification* of prescribed material within study guides;

- careful *setting of tasks* for assignments, so as to progressively foster both perceptive reading and clear formulation, and
- *sensitive corrective teaching* in follow-up tutorial letters in order to address problems students have in completing their assignments (Gräbe, 1987:228-229).

For practical reasons distance education lecturers cannot monitor all the reading tasks, and they also cannot address all the reading problems which students may have. They can, however, provide support to *enhance students' comprehension of reading tasks* at hand, and they can *teach various reading strategies* to their students. They also do *have control over the texts* which students have to read and study. They should not only pay attention to the cognitive aspects in study reading, but the influence of affective factors in reading should not be forgotten. By providing a large variety of reading strategies to students, they will be able to choose reading strategies which slot in with their individual differences, as well as with their personal learning styles and approaches to learning.

Instead of trying to compensate for the loss of direct oral communication, lecturers should direct their energy towards devising means to enhance students' motivation and to improve their reading, studying and writing skills. Student motivation and support, as well as various forms of reading support, should be included in the study package of distance education students. By providing a variety of reading support, lecturers could make provision for the uniqueness of every student. Differences in language abilities, reading skills, learning styles and in learning approaches could thus be catered for.

### 4.8.2 Instructing reading strategies

The fact that readers have to change their reading strategies according to the reading purposes was already referred to in the substrata-factor theory of reading (**3.2.3**). Reading strategies also form one of the four components of the information processing model of reading (**3.2.4**). Students should have a repertoire of a variety of reading strategies from which they can choose according to the requirements of the reading task they have to execute, and according to their own personal learning styles and approaches to learning.

Strategy instruction can improve comprehension of the text and it can also increase the amount and breadth of reading activity. Students' motivation to read and their interest in books are fostered when lecturers emphasise the importance of comprehending and learning from books. By doing so, both the cognitive and the social aspects of reading are stressed (Guthrie et al, 1995:8 & 23).

It is important that distance education students who are very dependent on reading as a means to their studies should be guided to use *strategies for reading* in a purposeful manner. Reading strategies have specific characteristics:

- they emphasise intentional and deliberate plans under the control of the reader;
- readers are forced to use reasoning and critical thinking abilities while constructing and reconstructing meaning from text;
- readers are able to modify strategies to fit different kinds of texts and purposes, and
- strategies reflect metacognitive awareness, and readers can reflect on what they are doing while they are reading (Dole, et al 1991:242).

If one considers the above characteristics of reading strategies, it is clear that they could be built into the study material, especially the printed text provided to distance education students. Students should be taught to know that they can *use deliberate*

If one considers the above characteristics of reading strategies, it is clear that they could be built into the study material, especially the printed text provided to distance education students. Students should be taught to know that they can *use deliberate plans* to ensure that they comprehend while reading, and they should be taught that they can and should adapt reading plans, or actually implement reading strategies to fit a reading task at hand. Students should also be coaxed to use their reasoning abilities when they read. This will prevent them from reading without understanding. It is important to *instruct study reading strategies explicitly* to students. Lecturers who provide explicit description of reading strategies, promote their students' comprehension of text (Duffy, Roehler and Rackliffe, 1986:11-16). The following two examples of explicit instruction in reading strategies were taken from study guides for distance education students:

Exhibit 1

> *Effective reading skills.* The ability to read effectively (although not necessarily quickly) is important for anyone who is studying. You have to learn skimming and scanning techniques and to concentrate on your work. You will learn more about reading and writing skills in ... (Van Schoor and Van Helden, 1997:10-11).

Exhibit 2

> There are four reading methods, each of which contributes to effective reading. You should practise all these methods and master them. There are few good careers in the business world that do not require effective reading. The better your reading, the better you will be able to write and better your chances of finding and keeping a good job. The four methods, which are sequential (follow in a particular order), are the following:
>
> - *skimming and scanning*, in which you *search* for something

- *reading with understanding*, in which you read *slowly and carefully* in order to grasp the *meaning* of the reading matter
- *critical reading*, which you do once you have understood the reading matter (Olivier, Martins, Cronjé, Van Schoor and Van Helden, 1998:200).

Students could be instructed more explicitly about *skimming* and *scanning*. *Skimming* and *scanning* are used very often when one has to read many pages. Skimming and scanning involve a kind of reading which implies searching for key words. Students should know that one has a certain goal in view when you conduct a search process. The subject index could for instance tell one where to obtain information on certain key concepts (Olivier et al, 1998:200).

Students should be taught that *skimming* is a rapid type of reading done to obtain the general gist of a paragraph or piece of text. One can skim an article by reading the captions and headings and letting one's eyes swoop over the article alighting on key words and key phrases. One always has a general question in mind when skim reading such as: What is the text about? *Scanning* on the other hand is a rapid type of reading done to obtain specific facts or specific information and answering a question such as: What does this text say about such and such? Scanning does not involve reading every word and depends on speed and visualisation (Orr and Schutte, 1992:2-3).

There are also other reading methods which could be taught to students, for example the *PARS method* discussed in **4.8.5** (**Helping students to set purposes and goals (desired outcomes) for reading**), as well as the SQ3R reading method and the PANOROMA reading method. Reading methods could help students to realise that they should read with a specific purpose in mind when they study. Reading methods also help students as a means for holding ideas together while reading.

The *SQ3R method* is a well-known reading method which could help students to read and study purposefully. It consists of the following steps:

- Survey - the reader gets acquainted with the section to be read and studied by using a broad outline;
- Question - questions on the section are formulated;
- Read - purposeful reading of the section;
- Recite - testing to find out whether the section was understood by answering questions;
- Review - the reader ensures that he or she retains what has been read (Alexander and Heathington, 1988:347).

*PANORAMA* is another reading method which could also help students to read and study purposefully. The steps to be followed, are:

- Purpose for reading is set;
- Adapt rate of reading;
- Need to pose questions;
- Overview of section to be read;
- Read and relate;
- Annotate by, for instance, writing short notes;
- Memorise what has been read;
- Assess if information is retained (Cheek and Cheek, 1983:180).

Various other reading strategies will be discussed in the following sections.

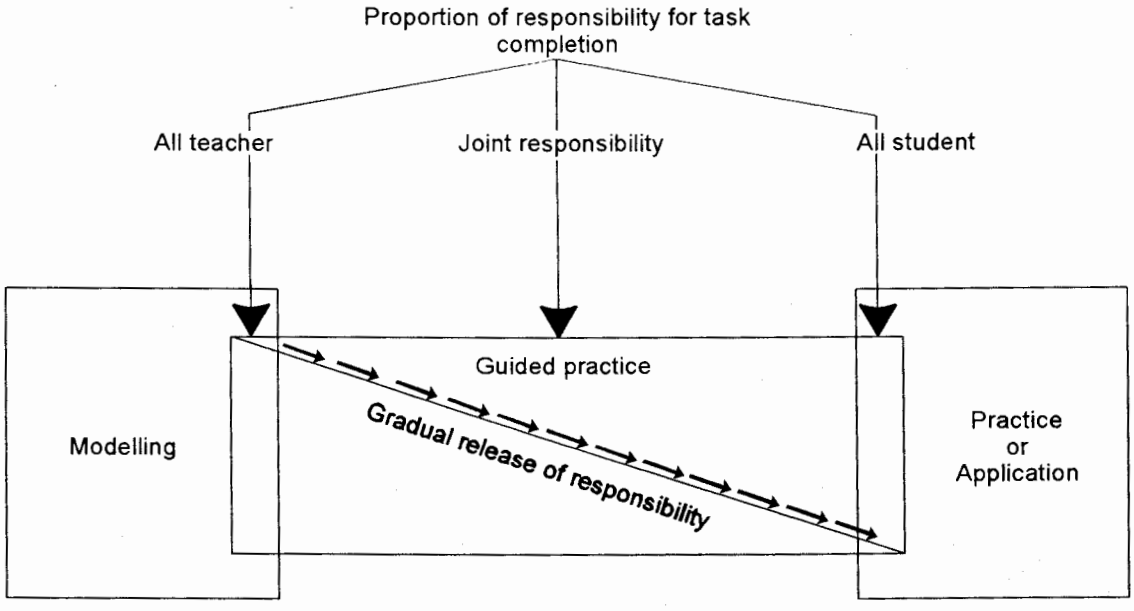
### 4.8.3 Comprehension instruction

The role of lecturers has changed from a transmission orientation to a learner orientation. A lecturer should therefore be a mediator who helps students to construct understanding from the content of the text itself. Students should also be guided to develop strategies which aid in interpreting the text (Dole et al, 1991:252). This notion is supported by Pressley, Schuder, Bergman and El-Dinary (1992:240). These reading researchers stress the fact that many dimensions of self-regulated reading might be promoted by instructing reading strategies explicitly. Thus students could become *self-determining agents* (cf **2.4.1 Learning**) who take responsibility for their learning.

The role of the lecturer in facilitating the reading process is explained in the following adapted figure from Pearson and Fielding (1991:818). A lecturer should initially act as facilitator of student reading and slowly shift the responsibility over to the students.

Figure 4.1

Relative degree of responsibility accepted by lecturers and students for completion of a reading task




(Pearson and Fielding, 1991:818)

At the leftmost side of the figure, the lecturer accepts all responsibility and the student none. At the rightmost side, the student accepts all responsibility and the teacher none. Independent practice or application is regarded as 100 per cent student condition (Pearson and Fielding, 1991:818).

Many distance learners in South Africa are expected to take 100 per cent responsibility for the practice and application of a reading strategy. Quite often they have not been taught how to use and apply specific reading strategies. Since distance education lecturers are not able to monitor their students' comprehension in class, they should make provision for comprehension monitoring in the text.

Part of the process of monitoring reading comprehension, is the identification of those factors which might cause obstacles in reading comprehension and eliminating them. An obstacle, when reading, can for instance be the infrequent or ineffective use of certain strategies such as visualisation, integration, main idea identification and self-questioning techniques. Lecturers should provide direct instruction in these strategies by *modelling* them until students have mastered them and they become the students' personal reading skills (Smith, 1989:384-385). To lecturers of distance education students, modelling reading techniques can pose a problem. Such modelling of reading strategies could, however, be redesigned and reformulated to form part of the instructional package of distance education students.

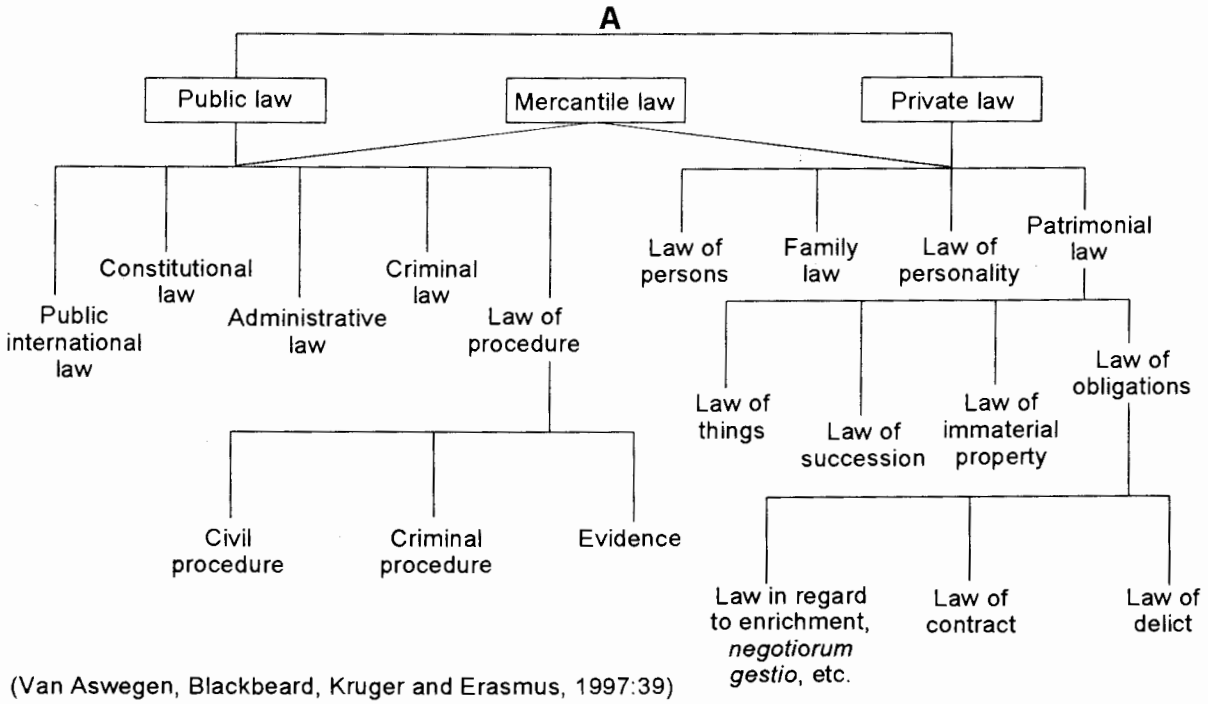
The following advice could be given to distance education students to help them to comprehend while reading:

> A hint to reading effectively with understanding is to identify the *main points*, *supporting details* and *examples* in the reading matter. You could also make brief notes on the main points in a learning unit (Olivier et al, 1998:202).

Before studying a certain subject, students could be provided with a *schematic representation of the subject*, helping them to get an overview of the subject content and to understand the content as a whole. The following example was taken from a distance education study guide, for the Law of Persons:

Figure 4.2

Schematic presentation from a Law of Persons' study guide




(Van Aswegen, Blackbeard, Kruger and Erasmus, 1997:39)

The lecturer indicated main categories, subcategories and the relations between main and subcategories. In this way the student is able to place a subcategory within the greater meaningful context. Since *aims and objectives* (desired outcomes) are very important for comprehension monitoring, students should be made aware of their importance and guided towards the development of skills in formulating these aims and objectives (cf **4.8.5 Helping students to set purposes and goals (desired outcomes) for reading** for examples of purposes for reading). The aim of

comprehension instruction in reading is to help students to develop a sense of conscious control or metacognitive awareness over a set of strategies. Students should also be taught to adapt reading strategies according to the text they are reading. The following strategies could be taught:

- *Determining importance*: This stresses the ability to separate the important from the unimportant which leads to effective comprehension. The ability to accomplish this task is amenable to instruction.
- *Summarising information*: The ability to summarise information requires readers to sift through large units of text, to differentiate between important and unimportant ideas, and then synthesise those ideas and create a new text which stands for the original.
- *Drawing inferences*: Inference is the heart of the comprehension process. When readers construct their own models of meaning from a given text, they use inferencing extensively in order to fill in details omitted from text, and to elaborate on what they have read.
- *Generating questions*: Instruction to promote student-generated questions leads to improved text comprehension.
- *Monitoring comprehension*: Comprehension monitoring and 'fix-it' strategies are important for developing expertise in reading comprehension. When students are not comprehending when reading, they should have certain strategies which they could use to support their comprehension (Dole et al, 1991:243-248).

Ways in which these strategies could be instructed, are discussed in the ensuing sections.

Two aspects are essential to help readers to understand a text. The one aspect is the *knowledge, which readers bring to the text,* and the other aspect is *the strategies* which they use *to foster and maintain understanding*. All readers, both expert and poor, use their existing knowledge and a range of cues from the text and the situation in which

the reading occurs, to build a model of meaning from the text. Although students' existing knowledge is crucial to the comprehension, the relationship between that knowledge and comprehension of the text, is not simple. Sometimes the knowledge is inherent and not brought to bear in the comprehension process. Other times the knowledge is incomplete, fragmented or even misleading. When students possess knowledge which conflicts with the information in the text, their existing knowledge can prevail over textual information (Dole et al, 1991:241).

As far as ESL students with limited proficiency in English and text are concerned, lecturers should spend time researching the *background information relevant to semantic interpretation* of text by these students. This will help them to understand how words and linguistic structures are used innovatively by ESL students (Kilfoil, 1993:6). They should then adapt the study material which is provided to ESL students with limited proficiency in English to provide support for these students and to enable them to comprehend the text better. See **Addendum B** about background knowledge on biographical information and the content of a novel, as well as background knowledge for a play. The background knowledge discussed in **Addendum B** was supplied to distance education students doing a practical English course. Background knowledge can also be used for motivational purposes. The following is an example of background knowledge which was given in a study guide of students doing a Practical English course:

Exhibit 3

> Even though it is more difficult to learn in English if it is not one's mother tongue, it is by no means impossible. Many second language speakers of English master the language so well that they become well-known poets or authors in English.

* Poets: Mongane Wally Serote, Oswald Mtshali, Casey Motsisi, Wopko Jensma, Mzwake Mbuli and Sipho Sepamla
* Novelists: Wole Soyinka, Rose Zwi, Chinua Achebe, Zakes Mda, Sol Plaatje, Ngugi sa Thiongo
* Autobiographical writers: Nelson Mandela, Ezekiel Mphalele, Sindiwe Magona and Ellen Kuzwayo

These are only some of tne many successful writers who are second or foreign language speakers of English (Marshall and Roos, 1997:32).

The following information on reading a foreign language could be supplied to distance education students who are studying a foreign language. This could help them to understand text which is written in a foreign language with more ease. The following example was provided to students who are studying Spanish as a foreign language (Rowe, 1999:viii-ix).

Exhibit 4

**Dos and don'ts of reading a foreign language**

**Don't panic!** You are not reading in your home language and can't expect to understand everything you read right away or to read as quickly as you normally would. With time and practice, reading in Spanish will become easier. Remember, we don't expect you to look up every single word you don't understand - this would be a very frustrating task and would take all the pleasure out of the reading process.

**Before reading** Go over the grammar points mentioned prior to the text itself as this will facilitate understanding. Once you have completed the comprehension exercises you may wish to

reread the text, picking out verbs, pronouns, adjectives, etc. that you revised earlier.

**First reading** Read the text through once to get a general idea of what it is about. Try to read without referring to the glossary as this will slow you down. Remember that you are concerned here with ideas, concepts and facts and not individual words. Furthermore, the meaning may emerge as you read on.

**Second reading** Read the text a second time, referring where necessary to the glossary and looking up any words that are **essential** to your understanding of the text. Try, wherever possible, to infer the meaning of the word by looking at the context in which it is used.

**Questions** It may be helpful to refer to the comprehension questions which follow the text as these questions will give you an idea of what the text is about.

**Vocabulary** As you read you will come across a great man y words that are new to you. You are not expected to memorise all this new vocabulary. Words that appear frequently will soon become familiar to you and presently you will find yourself incorporating this vocabulary into your own sentences.

Distance education students have an enormous amount of reading to do, and they could benefit from lecturers' help to determine the *importance of sections from the text to be read.* Students could for instance be lead by lecturers to decide between sections which are important to know for the sake of knowing and passing a subject and sections which are merely interesting to know.

Lecturers should supply students with examples of ***various forms of summaries*** which could be made, since not all students have proper knowledge of summarising techniques. Summarising requires that students impose a macrostructure on reading material by deleting what is redundant and unimportant, and focusing on required aspects. Questions could be compiled from the text to help students to focus on main ideas within a text, and to provide assessment of their current level of understanding. The main ideas could be used to compile summaries (Casanave, 1988:292).

By supplying *various forms of summaries*, lecturers offer students the opportunity to choose a method for summarising which fits the various personal learning styles of students, as well as the differences in their reading and comprehension abilities. It could also be chosen according to the type of content which has to be studied.

The following methods serve as examples of types of summaries which could be taught to distance education students:

- *Association*: It is possible to arrange and associate information in such a way that it becomes easier to recall. If there are facts to be committed to memory, the learners should group together those facts which are related. For example, it is possible to learn a number of words by grouping them together and then associate them with objects or situations.
- *Drawings*: Many individuals find that drawings or sketches help them to remember. Instead of remembering a word or a concept, a learner remembers a drawing that represents the word. By using this method, a sequence of facts becomes a series of drawings to be remembered.
- *Summaries from a section of reading*: Lecturers should impress upon their students that they have to provide their summaries with a definite structure. They could give their students a blank structure template on the basis of which they could summarise a section of a textbook and initially supply some of the information.

- *Mindmaps (brain maps) or semantic charts*: Mindmaps or semantic charts could replace summaries, but they are also useful to outline new information and new vocabulary (Ways in which mindmaps could be designed are discussed below).
- *Chronological networking*: This could be used in sections of the work where a story relates events in a certain order or when events follow chronologically, for instance in history, Biblical studies or in literature.
- *Theme charting*: A central theme is presented in the middle of a chart, from which various subthemes and secondary subthemes flow.
- *Classification networking*: This network contains only one heading with two or more principal themes. Various subthemes and secondary subthemes flow from the principal themes (University of South Africa, 1997b:231-233).

***Questioning*** can also be used for comprehension monitoring. The *PARS reading method* as discussed in the above section (**4.8.2 Instructing reading strategies**) could be explained to students, in order to help them to generate their own questions before reading a text. *Anticipation of possible postreading questions* could also be explained to students as a postreading strategy. While reading students will be forced to hypothesise, monitor and control their comprehension. Distance education lecturers could for instance prepare their students by means of introductory notes that unspecified questions will follow after they had read a section from a text. *Various forms of these questions which can be used as metacognitive strategies* will be discussed below (in **4.8.4 Instructing metacognition**). Such questions can also be used to *monitor comprehension* while reading. Students can for instance be guided to formulate questions while they read. Thus students would read with a purpose and monitor their comprehension at the same time. (See **Addendum C** for more ways in which distance education students could be guided to read with a purpose.)

Various *forms of text remodelling* which can help students when reading and studying from written text could be used to promote content comprehension. One such form is *webbing*, which provides a structure by means of which students can access and organise information and ideas. Thus the known and the unknown can be connected. Research and theory both endorse webbing as a vehicle for enhancing comprehension and learning. For second language learners the network of ideas which are captured in webs, highlight vocabulary. Webbing also provide concrete representation of information, as well as the connections between concepts (Farnan, Flood and Lapp, 1994:145-146).

*Various graphic organisers of concepts* could also be used to promote content comprehension. Hadaway and Young (1994:522-525) introduce the following graphic organisations of concepts to be used in order to promote content comprehension:

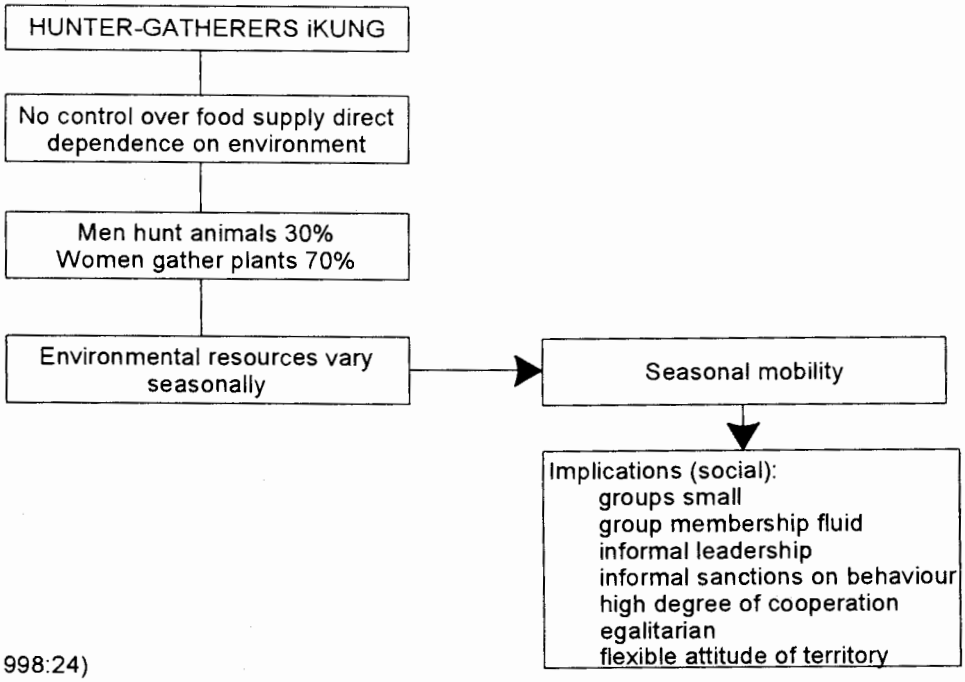
- *Timelines*: Using index cards, students can record important events.
- *Venn diagrams*: Using circles, Venn diagrams help students view independent and interrelated aspects of concepts.
- *H-maps* (comparison/contrast maps): H-maps serve as a comparison and contrast tool. Each side of the map provides space to detail differences between concepts. The middle section is used to note commonalities.
- *Flow charts*: These charts help students to grasp the sequence of activities.
- *Graphs/charts*: Students should be guided to develop the conceptual frameworks needed to read graphic aids effectively.

How to construct a certain graphic organiser should always be explained to students before examples of the types of organiser are given to them. Students should, for instance, be informed that advance organisers and graphic organisers could be used as introductory text material which would provide a cognitive scaffolding within which the students could organise the information they have to learn (Willis, Stephens and Matthew, 1996:123).

One type of graphic representation which could be introduced to students is *linear notetaking*. Students should, however, be informed that linear notetaking depends mainly on the functioning of the left side of the brain and not necessarily of both sides of the brain. Using both the left side and the right side of the brain is conducive for studying. Buzan (1983:90-91) maintains in this regard that linear presentation is not vital for understanding and in many instances it can be a disadvantage. The mind is capable of taking information which is non-linear, such as non-linear forms of print: photographs, illustrations and diagrams. The brain works primarily with key concepts in an interlinked and integrated manner. Therefore notes and word relations should in many instances be structured in a non-linear way rather than on traditional lines.

The following example of a linear outline was taken from the history study guide at the University of South Africa (thus distance education students):

Figure 4.3
Linear outline from a history study guide

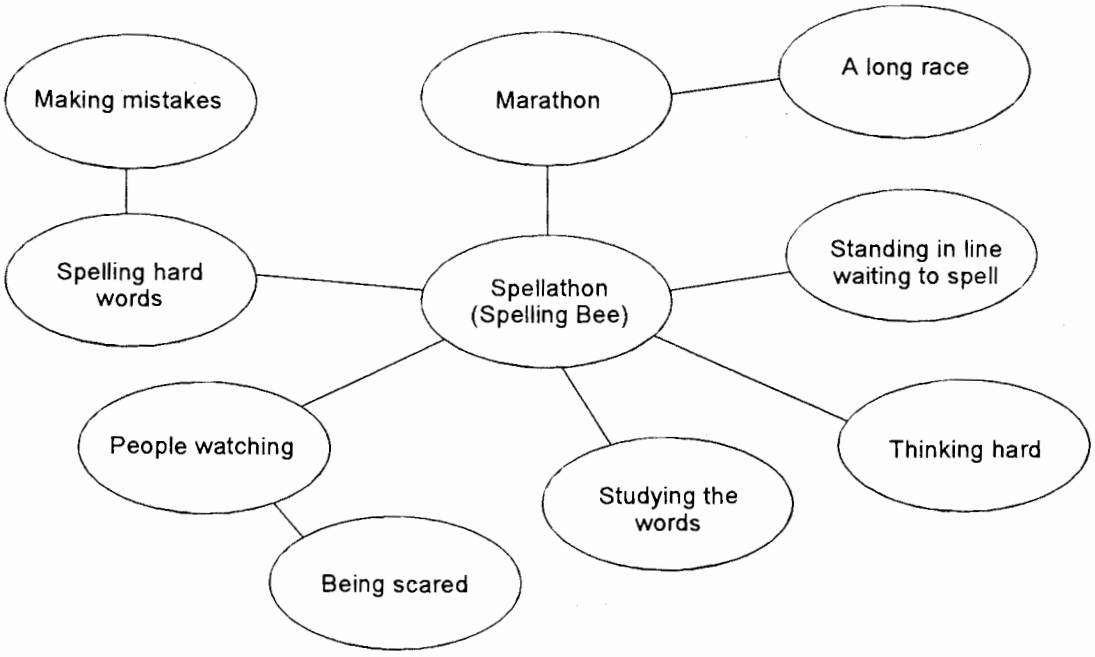



(Harris, 1998:24)

Students can use ***semantic mapping*** as a learning strategy, as well as for reading comprehension. In semantic mapping concepts are categorised in order to clarify new vocabulary and to convey the structure of reading passages. New vocabulary could be related to students' prior knowledge and experiences to increase their understanding of new concepts (Jonassen and Grabowski, 1993:437-438). On the other hand, semantic webbing can be used to activate students' prior knowledge before reading (Willis et al, 1996:127). This can be very helpful to students who have problems understanding a text.

The following is an example of a semantic map which was compiled on the word 'spellathon' as a pre-reading activity.

Figure 4.4
Semantic map about the word "spellathon"




(Willis, Stephens and Matthew, 1996:127)

According to Buzan (1983:110) the brain processes information better if the information is designed to 'slot in' with the left side, as well as with the right side of the brain. Therefore a note taking, and thought organisation, technique designed to satisfy the needs of the whole brain would have to include not only words, numbers, order, sequence and lines (left side of the brain), but also colours, images, dimensions, symbols and visual rhythms (right side of the brain). In order to be well designed, *mind maps* (also referred to as *brain maps*) should comply to these requirements.

Mindmaps can also be used to summarise a section of a text. By both drawing a mindmap and making a summary, students' comprehension monitoring while they read, as well as their metacognitive awareness, would be supported.

The following is an explanation of mindmaps which were supplied in a study text for distance education students.

Exhibit 5

**WHAT IS A MINDMAP?**

Drawing a mindmap is another way of interacting with a text. You cannot do this in the text itself, as when underlining or highlighting; nor can you do it in the margins as when segmenting and labelling. You need a clean sheet of paper. A pen or a pencil would do, but it is helpful to be able to use different colours.

Drawing a mindmap is a type of textmapping. Remember our description of textmapping

* You identify *parts* of the text
* You note their relationship to the *whole* of the text
* You *select* and *apply* some method of recording your insight

This means that you *analyse* the structure of the text. Then you have to record the results of your analysis so that you have notes for future reference.

### WHAT DOES A MINDMAP LOOK LIKE?

You might think of a bicycle wheel with spokes radiating from the centre or hub of the wheel. That is the basic structure of a mindmap. It can get more complicated than a wheel, though, as each 'spoke' can divide into branches, and those can subdivide yet again. Some people talk about branching notes, spider notes or clusters.

Remember that every textmapping technique is not suited for every type of text. If the text you are reading is sequential - that is, describes a number of actions or events in a specific sequence, such as the provision of instructions for carrying out an experiment, a mind map is probably not the best mapping method. A linear method would be better, showing progression in a straight line from beginning to end. If, however, you want to express relationships, a mindmap could be very helpful, as a mindmap is a circular rather than a linear structure (University of South Africa,1997a:121-122).

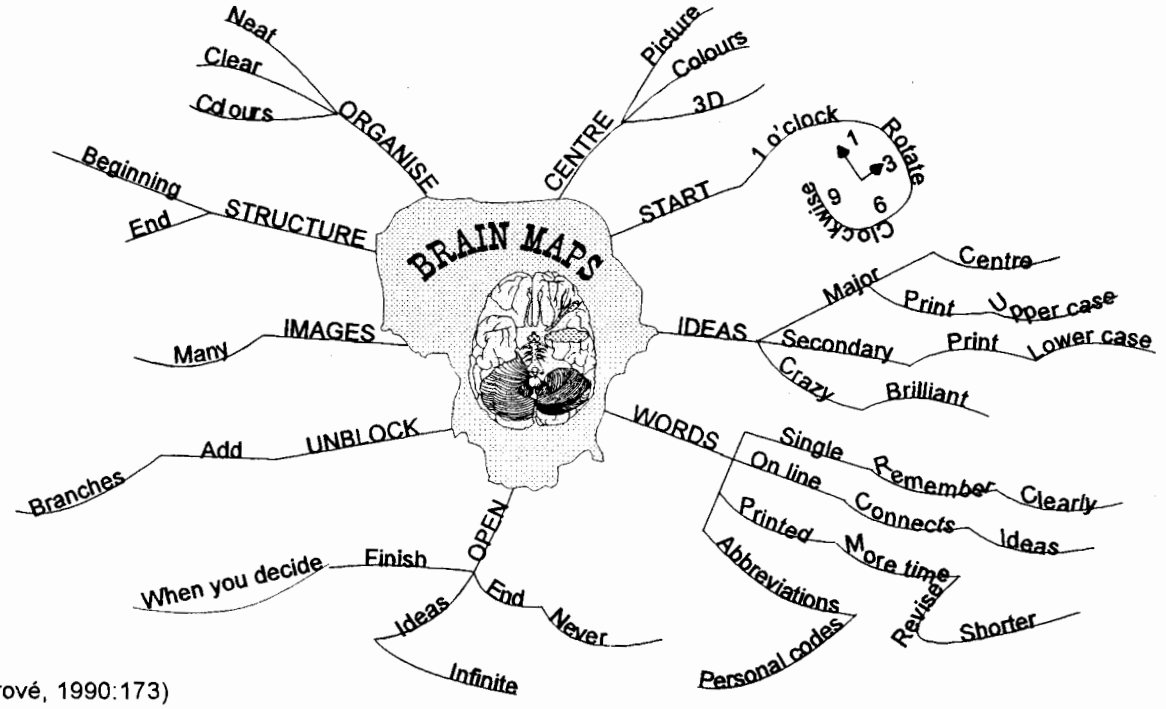
According to Grové (1990:170) research has shown that mind maps or brain maps are the most effective way of making a summary. The reasons are:

- the brain absorbs the configuration used in a mind map far more readily than pages of print;
- the mind map organises material in a way that makes it easier to understand and remember;
- although it may initially take more time to draw the brain map, revision can be done very quickly;
- it is much more fun making a summary in this way. If a person enjoys doing something he or she also does it much better, and

- people's memories respond better to pictures. The mind map is more like a picture than any other type of summary, especially when colour drawings are used and the images are three-dimensional.

Mindmaps can have various forms. The following is an example of a mindmap, on what a brainmap is.

**Figure 4.5**
**Mindmap of what a brainmap is**

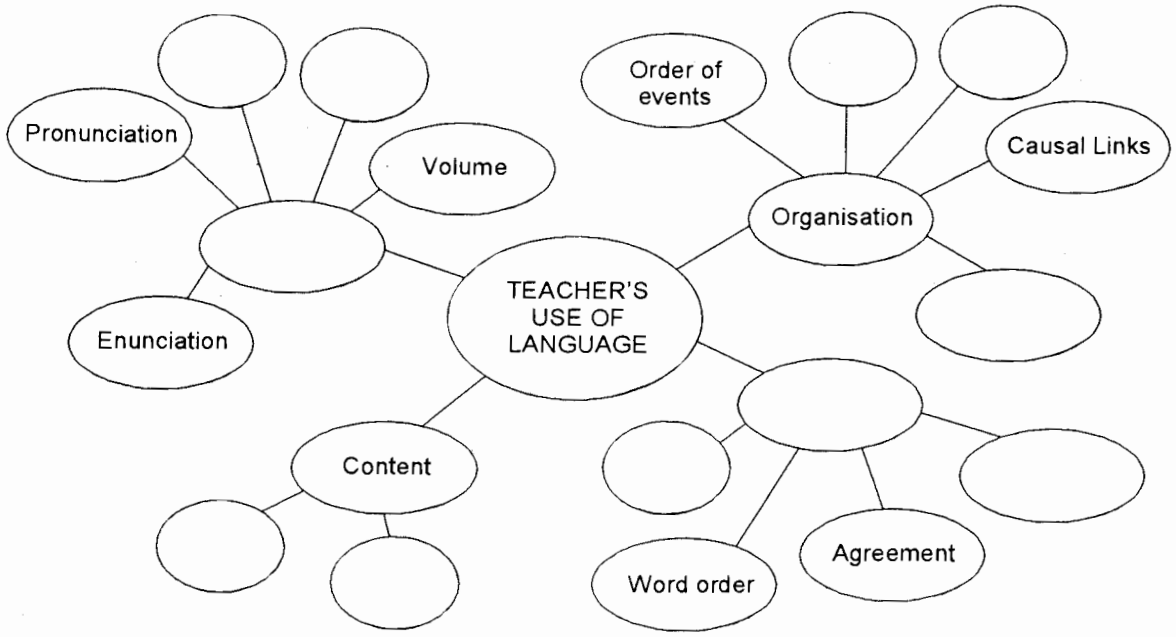



(Grové, 1990:173)

The following is an example of a mindmap which distance education students had to complete as a summary of a lesson:

Figure 4.6

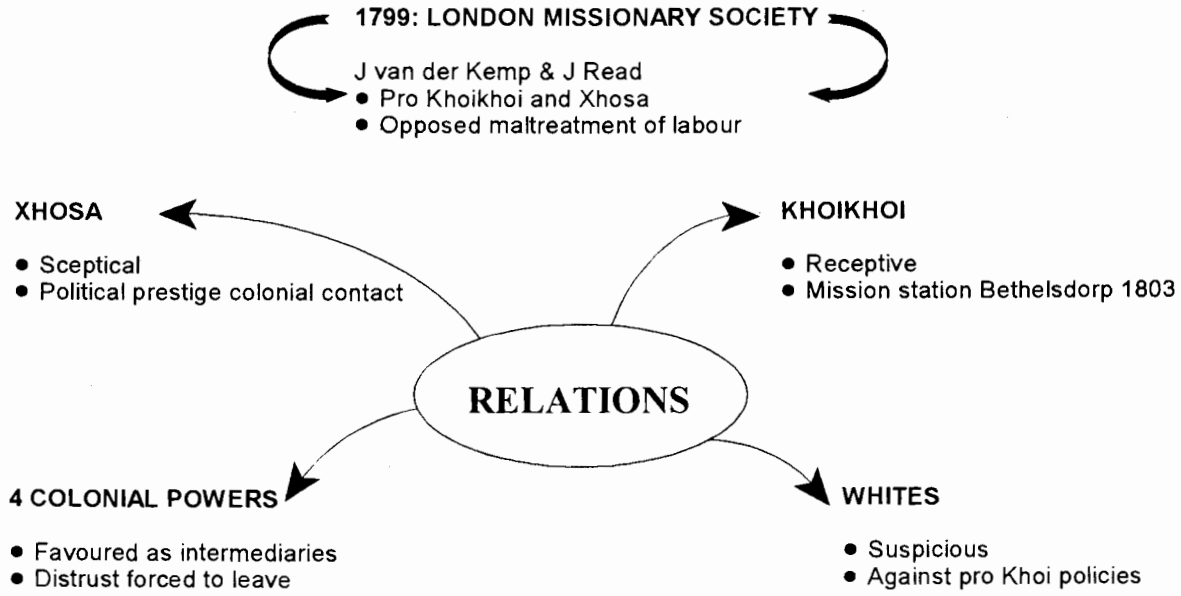
Mindmap of a summary of a lesson




(Marshall and Roos, 1997:39)

Below is another type of mindmap. It was taken from a history study guide for distance education students:

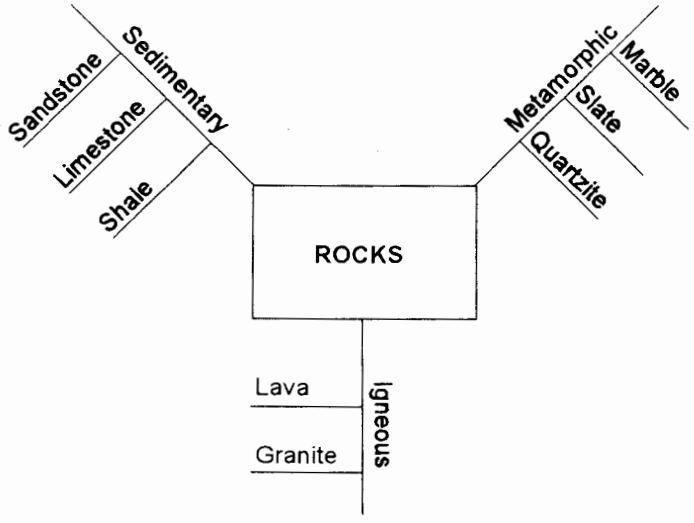
Figure 4.7
Mindmap from a history study guide




(Harris, 1998:119)

*Spider maps* can also be used as study strategies. A spider map is regarded as an alternative to traditional note taking from text, as it represents a particular type of mindmap. In spider mapping the main idea of the text passage is written in the centre of the page and related, subordinate concepts are written alnong lines connected to the central idea. Additional lines with increasingly detailed content can be added to the drawing, so that the end product looks similar to a spider web (Jonassen and Grabowski, 1993:438). This could help students to comprehend the main ideas of a text, as well as the words which are related to the main idea.

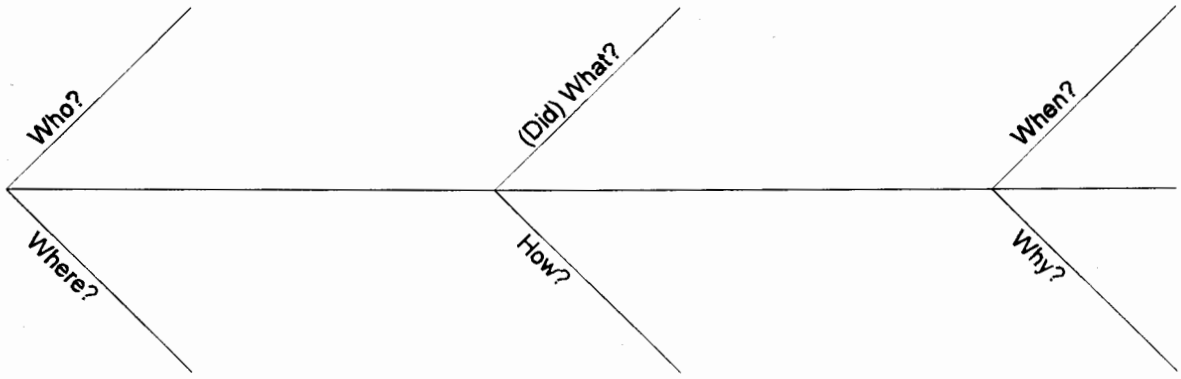
Figure 4.8
Example of a spider map




*(Jonassen and Grabowski, 1993:438)*

Information can be organised by using *herringbone charts*. The herringbone is a graphic outline which can help students to focus their attention on critical information that they read, and it is therefore suitable for study reading purposes (Willis et al, 1996: 132). A herringbone chart is a very logical and organised way of organising information in terms of who, what, where and when.

Figure 4.9
Example of a herringbone chart




(Willis, Stephens and Matthew, 1996:132)

*Cartoons* are valuable for study purposes. The following is part of a cartoon sequence depicting the chronological sequence of the novel 'So long a letter'. Students were requested to fill in the missing captions so that events in the plot could be described in the correct order: When supplying cartoons to students, academic work immediately becomes more interesting and students' motivation increases. The right side of the brain which deals with rhythm, music, images and imagination, colour, parallel processing, daydreaming, face recognition and map recognition is also used (Buzan, 1983:14). A cartoon also presents a way of introducing humour into the learning activity, which immediately captures and holds the attention of the student, thus motivating the learner to learn.

Figure 4.10

Cartoon sequence from a study guide for english communication for literature


(Dowling, 1997:17)

It is a good idea to supply students with many examples of possible ways in which they can possibly deal with text, in order to enhance their comprehension while reading. A sound guideline in this regard is the provision of a variety of different ways of coping with text. Students will thus have the opportunity to choose comprehension fostering strategies which fit their own personal learning style preferences and approaches to learning.

### 4.8.4 Instructing metacognition

Metacognition and metacognitive training, whereby learners realise that they can, and actually should, control and monitor their own cognitive abilities, should form part of the students' approach to studying. Quite often students are not aware that metacognition plays an important role in *reading*, and especially in *study reading*. Metacognition helps persons to monitor *what they comprehend* and *what they do not comprehend* when reading and studying. They are thus enabled to adapt their learning process, if required.

This phenomenon appeals to students with various learning styles and a variety of interests. By adjusting cognitive activities, students could promote more effective comprehension in reading. It is essential that poor or inefficient readers should enhance their awareness of reading and their own reading strategies, which will ultimately help them to become better readers. Readers should find out what they are already aware of in terms of reading strategies, and they should then be helped to understand the *interactive nature* of reading and the active role played by readers. Blind training techniques should be avoided and should be replaced by informed self-control training (Carrell, 1989:128).

Research has identified that *during the reading process metacognition consists of many strategies such as planning, regulating, evaluating, summarising, questioning, clarifying*

*and predicting* (Spires, 1990:154-155). Many of these strategies are well-known and have been used as reading strategies for a long time. Readers are encouraged to use these strategies *consciously*; to control their understanding of texts which are being read. When utilising reading for study purposes, students should be encouraged to use these reading strategies as their own metacognitive strategies. The responsibility to help students to use metacognition during the study reading process successfully, also resides with lecturers. It is, therefore, not only necessary that students should be aware of the existence and the use of metacognition, but that they should be actively taught how to use metacognition for reading and studying (Hugo, 1993:59-60).

Metacognition is reportable, because it represents the conscious awareness of the cognitive aspects of thinking. Thus lecturers could communicate, discuss and demonstrate their knowledge about cognition and metacognition in a teaching situation (Jacobs and Paris, 1987:258). Metacognition can in fact be taught in conjunction with a reading task, and in this way comprehension performance in reading could be improved (Spires, 1990:164). For distance education students this instruction should obviously be provided within the texts they need to study. Students should at all times be encouraged to develop a positive attitude toward metacognition. If students are convinced that metacognitive reading strategies are important for their study success, they will be more likely to let these strategies become part of their standard learning repertoire (Spires, 1990:155).

They could, for instance, be taught precisely what *comprehensive reading which requires metacognitve awareness*, entails, and they should know that in the academic world, a great deal of the study material demands comprehensive reading. Comprehensive reading is a systematic, slow type of reading done to arrive at an understanding of a section from a text. In order to read comprehensively the following guidelines were supplied to distance education students:

Exhibit 6

- Read slowly. (You will often have already skimmed the text before you start comprehensive reading.)
- Read carefully in order to get the total message.
- Backtrack and re-read if you lose the thread of the argument.
- One stumbling block to successful comprehensive reading may be difficult vocabulary. If you encounter a word you do not understand, try one of the following strategies:
  - Use the context as an aid to making an intelligent guess about the meaning.
  - Look it up in a dictionary or the glossary of the textbook you are reading.
  - Ignore it unless the word is crucial to your understanding . You can often understand the gist of a text without necessarily knowing the meaning of every single word (Orr and Schutte, 1992:3-4).

Students should know that readers can actually *control* their comprehension when reading. The awareness of the learning process consists of:

- *task awareness* or what to study in a particular learning situation;
- *strategy awareness* or how best to learn it, and
- *performance awareness* or to what extent the task has been learned (Wade and Reynolds, 1989:6).

These uses of metacognition in the reading and studying process should ideally be supplied within the text of distance education students by for instance including relevant student questions and student activities and hints in the text.

*Verbal feedback* can be used by lecturers to demonstrate and model comprehension monitoring as a metacognitive awareness. Thus a lecturer in a contact situation could for instance read a section aloud. In between, the lecturer could comment on his or her comprehension monitoring and hypotheses. In this way students are gradually involved to give feedback of their own self-monitoring and prediction (Fitzgerald, 1983:251-252). For distance education students, verbal feedback will have to be adjusted to either written feedback or electronic communication.

Verbal feedback on metacognition in the reading process, can be followed by *reciprocal teaching*. In this case a student or a group of students take over the role of the lecturer. Students then teach and demonstrate metacognitive strategies and the application of strategies in written text. Thus the responsibility for controlling comprehension in a text is gradually transferred to the students themselves. Students can also work in small groups where they might define a problem related to a certain reading assignment and then devise a plan of action (McLain, 1991:170). This metacognitive strategy could also be implemented in study groups, which distance education students are advised to arrange.

An important strategy which can be taught to students to help them to use metacognition while reading and studying, is to guide students to control their own thinking processes *by carefully analysing the reading task at hand.* They should always monitor their comprehension of a section, after it has been read, for example by asking questions such as: 'What did I learn her?' 'How can I learn more effectively' and 'How well do I know this?' (cf Exhibit 7). Students should be made aware that they can rely on their own knowledge and reading skills to comprehend what they read (Jacobowitz, 1990:623).

Comprehension monitoring (discussed in **4.8.3 Comprehension instruction**) as a reading activity under the umbrella of metacognition, consists of any behaviour that allows readers to judge whether comprehension is taking place and what actions to

take when comprehension is not taking place. These actions include: the ability to *evaluate* one's level of understanding; the ability to *plan* how to remedy a comprehension problem and the ability to *regulate* comprehension and 'fix-up' strategies (Casanave, 1988:288).

*Questioning* can play a significant role to help students to use metacognition when studying and reading. There are different ways in which questions could be asked. Self-questioning was already discussed in more detail (cf **4.8.3 Comprehension instruction**). It was indicated that lecturers have the responsibility to take note of possible internal and external indicators of purposes for reading and guide students to adapt their purposes for reading according to given tasks. It has also been suggested (**3.4.2 Reading and metacognition**) that lecturers should guide their students in the art of asking questions, since by asking questions, students establish objectives, select methods to attain them and make sure that their objectives are attained.

*Anticipation of possible post-reading questions*, is another helpful metacognitive reading strategy. Lecturers should provide students with examples of possible questions on the text which will guide the students to monitor their comprehension. This will eventually help students to increase their self-directedness in formulating their own questions.

When reading a section from a text with the foreknowledge that an unspecified question will follow, the best strategy while reading, is to hypothesise. Thus readers or students are compelled to analyse their reading comprehension. Self-questioning is a vital strategy which stimulates metacognitive activity and allows students to reach deeper levels of meaning. *Modelling* and *practice* are two other helpful strategies which can help students to use questioning successfully, and thus promote metacognitive activity during the study reading process (Stewart and Tei, 1983:39).

Frequent examples and applications (modelling) should be supplied in the text of distance education students.

Some lecturers prefer to insert sections between paragraphs or subheadings of the texts for distance education students, containing *questions* which ask them to reflect on their understanding of the sections that have been read. By introducing comprehension monitoring questions in this way, students are required to *reflect back* on what they have read; to *think ahead* on what they will read, and to *relate what they have read inside the text* to what they know of the world outside (Casanave, 1988:291-292).

Students should thus be trained to judge whether comprehension is taking place, by being sensitised to metacognitive awareness. This represents a form of self-assessment. They should also be taught what steps they should take when comprehension is not taking place. This training of students should include strategies in how to *evaluate* their own levels of understanding; the ability to *plan* how to remediate a comprehension problem, and they should be enabled to *regulate* comprehension and strategies, when they do not understand (Casanave, 1988:288). Distance education students could be supplied with direct examples of regulating comprehension (diagnostic and remedial examples) in the texts which they have to study.

The following is an example of a metalearning exercise which was supplied to distance education students.

Exhibit 7

**A metalearning exercise**

Metalearning is discussed in section 2.3.9 of the study guide. Self-questioning is obviously a vital component of metalearning because it serves as a form of

self-testing which helps learners to monitor whether they understand the material. Through self-questioning learners become aware of what they know and understand, but - and this is even more important - also of what they do not know or understand.

Do the following metalearning exercise by asking yourself the following questions:

- What did I learn from the assignment and the memorandum?
- Is it necessary to change the ideas I had before I started the assignment and got feedback by means of the memorandum?
- Do I understand the work covered in the assignment completely or do I have to consult the study guide again?
- What else can I read to supplement my knowledge of the content in the assignment?
- How can I improve next time I tackle an assignment?
- How can I apply my newly acquired knowledge in the future? (University of South Africa, 1999:19-20)

Another strategy which ESL students could use to help them with comprehension, while reading content-based academic text, is to teach them to be *better guessers of unknown words in texts*. Instead of presenting single meanings of isolated words the way in which word identification used to be taught formerly, it is now recommended that students *skip an unfamiliar word* and then guess the meaning of this word by using context clues (cf Exhibit 4). This skill is often used by first language speakers when reading in their own language. It fits in with the principles of the top-down and bottom-up models of reading (cf **3.2.2** ), from which it was evident that in order to be able to comprehend a text fluently, readers should use decoding skills, as well as active prediction of meanings on the the basis of textual cues and their cognitive schemata. ESL readers should develop similar ways of handling new and unfamiliar words. When

teaching ESL students it is, therefore, recommended that the focus should be on reading skill and reading strategy development, rather than vocabulary building. Thus ESL readers can become generators of guesses who rely to large extent on context clues, while constructing the meaning of a text (Haynes, 1993:47-48).

Both bottom-up and top-down processing is thus necessary in the processing of language written in a second language. Teachers and lecturers of ESL students could use the following to help their students as how to make guesses when reading (Haynes, 1993:60):

- encourage students to guess when there are ample clues availabe in the immediate context;
- be sensitive to the fact that students with low proficiency in their second language may experience more difficulty with guessing because of their limited linguistic knowledge;
- avoid exclusive reading of overredundant texts. Remember that word analysis can be a natural strategy. Help students to double check this type of initial guesses with the context and other information sources such as a dictionary, and
- provide practice in both guessing from context and word level graphonemic accuracy. The former helps to build flexibility while the latter develops more efficient access to word meaning already in the memory.

As far as ESL students are concerned, *semantic mapping or mindmapping* and *experience-text-relationships* can be used in metacognitive strategy training, to help students to enhance their reading in a second language. The effectiveness of the training will be related to differences in the learning styles of these students. Students' background knowledge about text structure affects their reading comprehension. In research which was conducted in the United States it was found that metacognitive strategy training in *semantic mapping or mindmapping* and in the *experience-text-*

*relationship* are effective to enhance second language reading. It was indicated that *instruction in text structure, facilitates learning from text*. In semantic mapping as a pre-reading activity, the students' prior knowledge of a topic is activated. Students are better prepared to understand, assimilate and evaluate the content that needs to be read. Students thus develop a map of the content before reading, both to learn the necessary key vocabulary and to activate their prior knowledge. As a postreading activity, semantic mapping can help students to recall, organise and represent, graphically, the important information which has been read (Carrell et al, 1989: 647,650-651).

In the *experience-text-relationship* a student can use discussion to link what he or she already knows, to what will be encountered in the text. In the *experience step* the lecturer leads the students in a discussion of their knowledge or experiences which are related in some way to the text to be read. It activates background knowledge and helps to motivate the students to read the text. This is sometimes called the actualisation of pre-knowledge. In the *text step* the students read short sections from the text and the lecturer asks questions about the content after each section. In the final step, the *relationship sequence*, the lecturer attempts to facilitate the students to draw relationships between the content of the text, and their outside experiences. In all three steps the lecturer attempts to model and guide the students systematically through the cognitive processes related to understanding a written text (Carrell et al, 1989:654). For distance education students all these processes should be explained and presented in the text.

It should be noted that instruction in the two metacognitive strategies, that is semantic mapping, and experience-text-relationship, as discussed in the two above paragraphs, are very dependent on, and related to, differences in the learning styles of students. According to Carrell et al (1989:668-669) there are significant interactions between students' learning styles and the effectiveness of training in these two different strategies. Although that adult ESL students can benefit from the inclusion of explicit,

comprehension-fostering metacognitive strategy training in reading, it should, however, be kept in mind that the types of such training should be varied to accommodate individual students and their different learning styles (cf **2.4.4 Learning style**). Again, the emphasis falls on the provision of a variety of strategies to accommodate students with different learning orientations.

As was discussed in section **4.3** which dealt with reading and computers, that the text on the screen of a computer can be visually presented in many different ways, to make it more accessible and clearer to learners. Since questions and comments can be inserted anywhere in the text, distance education students who learn from text on a computer screen, could be guided to insert questions in the text in order to reflect back on what they have read to ensure comprehension. They can also insert questions which will guide them to think ahead, and to help them to relate the new knowledge with their existing background knowledge. Various reading strategies which could enhance metacognition should, therefore, be explained to students in order to allow them the opportunity to choose a strategy or strategies which correspond with their personal learning styles. Students should also be provided with the necessary computer skills to be able to implement metacognitive strategies on computer.

### 4.8.5 Helping students to set purposes and goals (desired outcomes) for reading

Goals are vital for effective comprehension monitoring and optimal metacognitive awareness in the reading process. Students should thus be provided with direct instruction in strategies to *set goals* for reading comprehension. Students should know the importance of goals and should be guided towards developing skills to formulate their own goals and to use them for comprehension monitoring (Smith, 1989:384-385).

Lecturers quite often make the mistake of assigning a passage or a chapter from a prescribed book, or even a whole novel, to be read, without giving students *guidance in what to read for.* Distance education students who are forced to rely on reading as their main medium of information, by means of which they are introduced to subject content, should also be well informed as to *why they are reading a certain passage.* Setting purposes for reading provides a clarity of focus and influences students' short term objectives, and even their long term aims for reading and studying a text.

Setting purposes for reading should be done by lecturers prior to students starting to read. By setting such purposes, students know *what to focus on while reading* or they *get a preview of the task* they will be asked to complete after reading. A task preview which entails the purposes for reading, guides students' thinking to selected aspects of the text. Students can also utilise the *purpose* to select or develop *strategies* during reading. In this way students' metacognitive awareness and control will also be enhanced (Cunningham and Wall, 1994:481-483).

Purposes for reading encompass a wide range, from the general to the specific. The more difficult the text, the more specific the purposes for reading should be to provide clarity of focus. In this way students could be guided to the particular sections of the text which a lecturer regards as most important or most challenging. The purposes for reading should be geared to both the content and the type of text to be read (Cunningham and Wall, 1994:481).

The following serve as possible examples of purposes for reading in various subjects.

Exhibit 8

*Literature*: Read a particular story and separate the plot into six main events by using the six subheadings which are provided.

*History*: Read a particular chapter from a book on European history and select events that lead to the outbreak of the First World War. Divide the causes into two categories, that is the events that took place from 1908 to 1913; and the events which occurred just prior to the declaration of war.

*Geography*: Study a mind map of the topography of Africa. Read a particular chapter in a textbook on the topography of South America, and make your own summary by means of a mind map.

*Education*: List and give a short description of the teaching methods discussed in a particular textbook. Give examples of the use of these methods in the subjects that you are going to teach.

*Chemistry*: Read the chapter on molecules in a particular textbook, and complete the following table after you have read the chapter.

*Mathematics*: Read the following problems and underline the question in each problem.

The *PARS reading method* could also be used, since it is a good method for those students who are just beginning to develop strategies for reading, for the purpose of study. This method consists of the following steps (University of South Africa, 1997b:236):

- *Purpose*: In this step the student tries to establish a reason for reading a passage.
- *Ask*: Questions relative to the reasons that were formulated in the previous step are asked. In this way the student becomes involved with the contents of the reading matter even before starting to read.

- *Read*: These questions help to lead the student to knowledge of what is important and what to look out for while reading.
- *Summarise*: On completion of the reading task the student writes down, in his or her own words, the principal ideas of the passage that has been read.

These purposes for reading can help students to know what to focus on while reading and could be included in the study packages for distance education students, and this will sensitize them to use a certain strategy while reading. When students are reading with a particular purpose in mind, they will have to control their own understanding of the text and thus their metacognitive awareness will be activated. Students can be taught that setting purposes for reading can help them to activate relevant background knowledge and it can also help them to construct various forms of summaries such as mindmapping.

### 4.8.6 Using access structures to facilitate understanding of the text and study reading

Students should be trained to realise that each subject requires its own reading strategies because of the uniqueness of the language of the subject. They should, for instance, know that there is a difference between the reading and studying of mathematical content and the reading and studying of history text. They should also know that their reading speed must be appropriate to the content and task in hand. Lecturers who have been reading and studying in their various subjects for many years, are the best informed to equip students with the unique reading skills and reading strategies required in their specific subjects. The *unique language of every subject* and the *unique reading skills and strategies required in subjects* were discussed in **4.4.2** (**Problems experienced by students when reading academic content**). The role and influence of the text in the reading process can be regarded as one of the four interactive components of the interactive model of reading (**3.2.5**).

Several factors influence a students' approach to learning (as was discussed in **Chapter 3**). These factors include students' personal situations, their academic backgrounds, approaches to study and the text itself. It is, however, the last of these, *the text,* that is *under the direct control of the distance educator* (Marland et al, 1990:89). Distance education lecturers should thus design and choose the text and study material of their students with care.

Reading should be content based. Using authentic academic text will help the transfer of the understanding of reading strategies into the actual study material (Hayes and Diehl, 1982:659-660).

Students' attention should be drawn, where possible, to the *structure of the subject*, the *content presented in the text* and the *interdependence of the various content components* (Marland et al, 1990:89). This could help them to read and learn with more insight. As far as the structure of expository text is concerned, students could be guided to recognise a problem-solution structure in text. They can then draw up a visual representation (examples described in **4.8.3 Comprehension instruction**) or a frame of the problem-solution structure in the text, and finally they can write a summary of the information in the frame (Armbruster et al, 1989:130-131). Students can also use mindmaps to represent the interrelationship in the text or they can use cross-referencing to make the links between elements in the text explicit (Marland et al, 1990:90).

Various *access structures and mechanisms to text* can be added to help students to consistently grasp the meaning of the text. The reasons for including access structures in the text should be made explicit. Suggestions as to how students can use access structures as aids to learning should be provided in the texts of distance education students. The following can be used as access structures: formulating objectives, tables of content, headings, underlining of text, in-text activities and non-verbal devices

such as tables, graphs, maps, photographs, diagrams and cartoons (Marland et al, 1990:82-87). Access structures should be provided throughout the text.

Lecturers can also insert specific access structures at the beginning, during or at the end of the text. At *the beginning of the text* the following access structures could be inserted:

- explanatory titles;
- content lists;
- route maps of package or units;
- introduction or overview;
- links with other materials;
- lists of objectives, and
- guidance and information on how to use the material and pre-tests.

*During the text* examples of access devices could be the following: headings, numbering systems; instructions about what to do next; verbal signposts; graphic signals, and summaries. At the end of the text the following can be used: a glossary, post-tests and an index (Rowntree, 1995:124).

Distance education students can be instructed explicitly to understand and to use the structure of a text to improve their reading abilities. There are three approaches to teach the structure of text:

- the use of format cues such as headings, subheadings and paragraphs as indicators of text structure;
- concrete, visual representations of the organisation of ideas in the text could be made, and
- the common structure of expository text could be used.

Students should be encouraged to use *holistic strategies* when reading and studying from text. This will prevent them working from only one text which they might find difficult to read and understand, but simply have to study. Important vocabulary (especially subject specific words) should be embedded within the text. Working with various texts might also prepare students for further studies. Activities that students have to do, should all also be aimed at enhancing their language proficiency, not simply to expose them to the content. Changing and extending activities will certainly increase students' motivation and their eventual success in their studies.

*Academic course pairing* could also be used as an access structure to text. Two types of text are used to improve the reading performance and especially the reading comprehension of ESL students. The academic content of a subject provides an ESL student with sophisticated reading material. The paired ESL course provides multiple exposure to this material. The academic or technical explanation of concepts provided by readings in an academic course, and the practical application of those concepts in the reading material provided in the ESL component, would serve to enhance the material. This should facilitate vocabulary acquisition and should allow students to practise their reading skills and strategies in two courses, thereby reinforcing these skills and strategies. Thus using academic pairing, students are exposed to two different approaches to the same text. This should eventually help them to process the content at a deeper level of understanding (Kasper, 1994b:376 & 380).

### 4.8.7 Addressing language related variables and problems in reading

Low proficiency in a second language may inhibit a reader from transferring his or her sound first language reading skills to a second language context, or it may prevent making full use of syntactic, semantic and discourse cues in reading. During reading, guides, embedded aids and marginal notes could be added to provide definitions, expansions of ideas, simplifications and comparisons to help make the text more comprehensible and to build proficiency. Postreading strategies, special and technical vocabulary can for instance be reinforced and extended through mindmapping, feature analysis and other classifying or categorising activities. If students have the opportunity to use, test and manipulate vocabulary in a more natural language environment, it can be conducive to their vocabulary reinforcement and concept development (Kang, 1994:647-648). In **Addendum B** examples of how marginal notes could be added to text are provided.

A variable that may affect a student's ability to learn from content area text is the *knowledge variable, especially the background knowledge*. It should be remembered that culture-specific background knowledge which was developed in a student's community or native country may affect her or his comprehension and interpretation of social, cultural, historical and even scientific concepts. *Semantic maps, brainstorming, structured overviews* and *other pre-reading activities* can be used during pre-reading to help students to bridge the gap between what they know and the new information to be read. During reading, *guides* can be used to help readers to activate background knowledge and to suggest what to read and what to omit. Guides can also be implemented to direct distance education students to what lecturers consider important and could also help (especially ESL students with limited proficiency in English), to develop knowledge of text patterns. Activities to reinforce vocabulary and concepts such as mindmapping and semantic feature analysis can be used (Kang, 1994:648-649).

The following description of the Mfecane/Difaqane theory which was supplied to distance education students who study history, can serve as an example of the provision of background knowledge:

Exhibit 9

> The idea of a catastrophic period between 1815 and 1830 featuring black-on-black violence and forced migrations, accompanied by famine and caused by the rise of the Zulu kingdom, originated from evidence of British traders Francis Fynn and Nathaniel Isaacs and in oral traditions collected by Theophilus Shepstone and AT Bryant. The name Mfecane (in Zulu) and Difaqane (in Sotho, sometimes also Lifaqane) was given to it: this literally means 'destruction' or 'hammered'. Early historians such as Theal and Walker enlarged upon this, but JD Omer-Cooper (The Zulu aftermath: a nineteenth century revolution in Bantu Africa) gave great weight to the Difaqane theory in 1966. In this work and in those of historians such as P Maylam (A history of the African people of South Africa, 1986), TRH Davenport (South Africa: a modern history, 1991) and N Worden (The making of modern South Africa, 1994) the Difaqane is described as a political and socio-economic revolution which raged from 1815 to 1830 within the indigenous African societies, with consequences that were felt from the South African east coast to the Kalahari in the west, the Cape colony in the south and central Africa in the north. With Dingiswayo and then Shaka leading unprecedented wars in conquest, a chain reaction of violence was detonated which affected the whole of southern Africa (Malan, Carruthers and Theron, 1996:13-14).

In terms of *literacy variables*, some ESL students have too limited first language literacy skills or insufficient second language proficiency to transfer well-developed first language literacy skills. Quite often students have not made the transition from *learning to read,* to *reading to learn* which is a key issue in academic study. *Reading*

*to learn* requires a different type of processing of text which is increasingly sophisticated and which contains more concepts, concentrated information and abstract ideas. Students need higher level skills to react critically to text, to recall information and to synthesise information from text with information supplied by lecturers, by their personal background knowledge and by other readings (Kang, 1994:649).

*Pre-reading activities* to support the literacy variable could include pre-viewing the text, finding out what may be in the text from: headings, subheadings; boldfaced words and phrases, reading margin notes, and questions at the end of a chapter or illustrations. *Pre-reading activities* can also help students understand the purposes for reading assignments so that they can adjust their reading and reading style accordingly. Lecturers can provide students with the following process-oriented guides to support reading:

- directions, signals and questions to help students to interact with the text could be provided;
- guidance to supply selected reading and study skills and strategies;
- help to adjust the reading rate to match the reading task and the text;
- guidance to develop skimming and scanning skills to activate prior knowledge and to obtain important knowledge quickly;
- strategies for predicting outcomes, confirming inferences and solving problems;
- reinforcement of students' metacognitive skills by reminding them frequently to monitor their reading comprehension, and
- cues to students to employ appropriate strategies when they encounter comprehension difficulties or contradictions between their interpretations and the text (Kang, 1994:649-650).

As *post-reading activity* students could get more experience by using organisational patterns through writing. Thus more cognitive and affective involvement with the text could be encouraged (Kang, 1994:650).

By using the Fog Index, lecturers could determine the *reading difficulty of a passage*. The 'Fog Index' is calculated in the following way:

- Select three 100-word passages from the printed material, which is used by students. One passage should be taken from the beginning, one from the middle, and one from the end of the text.
- In each passage, the number of words which have three or more syllables should be counted. Proper names, compound words or verb forms which become three syllables by adding *ed* or *es*, are not counted.
- Determine the average sentence length for each passage.
- Add the number of three or more syllable words and the average sentence length.
- Multiply the sum by 0.4.
- The result is the 'fog index' of the passage.
- The Fog Index score represents the approximate grade level needed to read the passage.
- When the Fog Index grade level is much higher than the grade level of the class, lecturers should have to spend a great deal of time on directed vocabulary study. While the Fog Index does not identify specific words which will create difficulty, it is an efficient way to make comparisons between materials and to get a general indication of students' probable difficulties with a given selection (Smith and Elliot, 1986:67).

In **4.4.2** (**Problems experienced by students when reading academic content**) the following reading problems as experienced by students in South Africa were discussed: technical difficulties; vocabulary difficulties and syntactical difficulties, and difficulties

in cohesion and coherence. As far as *technical difficulties* are concerned, lecturers should make an in-depth study of all the reading material which they prescribe. Books could be rated according to their grades of language and reading difficulties. Thus students who have problems with the technical difficulty of books, could be informed and helped to select more accessible books at first.

When lecturers make an in-depth study of the books or other forms of study material they are intending to prescribe, they should take care to pay special attention to *vocabulary*. This is especially important when texts written by foreign authors are used. Academic language and subject specific terms pose problems to many students. Students should be provided with the necessary background information to enable them to understand unfamiliar vocabulary easily and promptly.

*Vocabulary* can for instance be introduced by *supplying a glossary* such as the following:

Exhibit 10

| | |
|---|---|
| ESL: | English Second Language |
| utterances: | words spoken by someone |
| elicit: | draw out; call forth |
| syntactically complex: | sentences that are quite complicated |
| connectiveness: | conjunctions; words and phrases that connect groups of words or sentences |
| cognitive: | relating to thinking processes |
| typology: | classification based on types |
| hierarchy: | organization of a system into grades of complexity |
| taxonomy: | classification |
| keeping track of: | being aware of; making a record of |
| conjecture: | guess (Orr and Spencer, 1998:143) |

They can also be helped to *understand concepts* by providing them with *columns to be matched*. The following example was given to distance education students:

Exhibit 11

| Column A | Column B |
|---|---|
| a) **freeburgher** | 1) employee of the Dutch East India Company |
| b) **VOC official** | 2) chief executive of the VOC at the Cape |
| c) **freehold grant** | 3) a former VOC official who became an independent farmer |
| d) **trekboer** | 4) a poor individual who squatted on the farms of trekboers |
| e) **voortrekker** | 5) white hunter-herders who moved into the interior |
| f) **commander** | 6) land made available to freeburghers without charge |
| g) **bywoner** | 7) large area of land registered by a farmer for a small rental |
| h) **leningplaats** | 8) a participant in the mass exodus from the Cape in the 1830s (Harris, 1998:71) |

Students are often not trained in the *unique reading skills and strategies* which the various subjects and content areas require (Hugo, 1991:36). Lecturers of all subjects should, therefore, assist their students to read and understand the various subject specific textbooks which require content-based reading. (This was specifically be addressed in **4.4.3 Content-based reading in the subject content with reference to ESL students**.)

Another reading problem which faces many students lies in the *unique language of every subject and the reading skills required to read and study the various subjects.*

In science texts there are for instance three types of words to be found: ordinary (English) words, academic register and scientific terminology (University of South Africa, 1997a:34). One should also remember that in terms of nomenclature, ordinary words sometimes have subject specific meanings which can prevent students from comprehending the meaning of words, for example words such as *'common', 'root'* and *'product'* have a specific mathematical meaning which is different to the meaning of the word in everyday usage. Students could also easily make a mistake with constructions such as *'the square of the sum'* versus *'the sum of the square'* (University of South Africa, 1997b:241).

It is imperative to inform students explicitly about the subject language which is used in every subject. Students studying mathematics could, for instance, be informed that:

- mathematics is expressed in a complex, but very precise, language;
- the language of mathematics assumes prior knowledge of mathematics, it assumes instructions will be executed and it places great emphasis on the general;
- nomenal dature of sets and numbers needs to be learnt;
- any mathematical formula, equation or expression can be expanded into a full English phrase or sentence which can be read aloud;
- the types and uses of bracket pairs in mathematics need to be learnt;
- the verb *to be* and the symbols which are derived from it play a very important role in mathematics, and
- some other English verbs have special meanings in mathematics (University of South Africa, 1997a:156).

As far as chemistry is concerned, students could, for example, be informed about the following problems related to the language of chemistry:

- The vocabulary of chemistry consists of some archaic terms and words, and phrases of ordinary language are used in a new, specialised senses, and new invented terms.
- Chemical elements, compounds, reactions, properties of matter, chemical structures, etc. are classified and systematized in many different ways. The most common ways are lists and tables.
- Each chemical element or compound is designated by only one name. Chemical elements take their names from various sources. It is desirable that a person learns to identify the chemical element or compound which a symbol stands for.
- Definitions are essential to an understanding of chemistry. All definitions of chemistry are related to one another. When reading a chemistry text, you have to consider how a given definition relates to a previous one.
- Chemical formulae are part of the language of chemistry. A sound knowledge of chemical formulae is a must in chemistry.
- Various abbreviations and signs are needed to indicate the information conveyed in a chemical fomula. For the purpose of easy identification and unambiguous encoding, it is necessary to know what an abbreviation or a sign stands for.
- As science students, they need to be familiar with the rules for building names from stems, suffixes, and prefixes and be familiar with numbering (University of South Africa, 1997a:157-158).

To help with the subject specific language of a subject a table, such as the following on the control of body temperature, can be supplied in a study guide (Marshall and Roos, 1997:106-107):

Exhibit 12

| **Specialised biological terms** | **Common nouns used and understood in everyday speech** |
|---|---|
| hypothalamus | brain |
| medulla | blood |
| sensory receptors | heat |
| nerve impulses | heating systems |
| arteries | body |
| capillaries | skin |
| latent heat | sweat |

Students should also be made aware that *textbooks differ* because of the difference between disciplines, the purposes of the authors, the characteristics of respective readers, and the difference in approach between authors. All these aspects make reading from textbooks complicated and difficult. Lecturers should, therefore, be aware of these differences, they should evaluate critically what they read and what they teach to their students (Marshall and Roos, 1997:102). See **Addendum A** for an example of the differences in approach between textbooks and how students could be supported to understand the different approaches.

The *volume of reading material* assigned for detailed study should be carefully selected to ensure that students, including ESL students, can handle the reading activities. If the reading load is too heavy, students may adopt a survival mentality and eventually become surface processors (Marland et al, 1990:89). Distance education students should be guided by lecturers to help them to distinguish *between more important and less important reading content*. Students could be taught to differentiate between reading content that could be read only for background knowledge, and content that

should be read and studied in depth. Thus *problems in cohesion* could be minimalised, and students would not waste time when reading unimportant background information.

Students sometimes have *syntactical difficulties* when reading academic text. Authors of academic reading material tend to write long sentences containing many interrupting constructions. When designing or selecting reading material for their various distance education courses, lecturers should always be aware of this pitfall.

*Difficulties in coherence* can be traced back to a lack of deep-level processing, which is evident from students' straight forward, text-based answers. Distance education lecturers should provide their students with mechanisms whereby to derive meaning from texts by for instance supplying appropriate background information; providing reasons for reading; supplying the author's intentions and assumptions, or by situating the texts within the larger context of a course or specific debate.

### 4.8.8 Enhancing students' motivation and interest

A lecturer has inter alia control over the following forms of motivation and support: *informational and encouraging feedback*, *magnitude and openness of tasks*, *nature of the performance*, certain *planned action sequences* and *reminding students of built-in rewards*. Lecturers could also play a role helping students to structure their academic work, to manage their time and to set attainable goals. The well-known *didactic principle of motivation* should thus be included in all forms of written instruction presented to students. In the distance education mode, students are not always present and therefore *external motivational factors* should be included in the various forms of contact, including all forms of written content which has to be read and studied.

As far as the affective factors of the reading process are concerned, four general approaches to the modification of affective factors are suggested. *Positive association* is a basic technique to develop emotional responses. As far as reading is concerned, a reader who has a neutral attitude towards books and reading, may be presented with books in a pleasant location. When using a *reward of operant conditoning* a reader is rewarded after a certain good reading behaviour. Thus the probability of the reader's reading in future is increased. *Modelling* is an excellent strategy for changing attitude toward reading. Seeing a well-known or an admired person reading, can stimulate a reluctant reader to read. *Persuasion* may also be used to change affective responses toward reading (Mathewson, 1985:854-855).

*Regarding interest as a contextual constraint* may promote new ways of involving students in what they should read and also improve their learning. Interest in a text may be controllable under certain conditions. Quite often students and lecturers have to study and use a particular text regardless of its appeal and the it may be helpful to focus the readers' attention on selected text information in the hope of increasing purpose-driven interest. A certain part of the text can for instance be read from different perspectives which is easily accomplished in a subject such as history. By focusing their attention, the students' interest may thus be enhanced. Activating relevant schematic knowledge prior to reading may also result in increased interest. It should be remembered that interest is not necessarily an inherent property of a text or is exclusively due to readers' preferences (Schraw and Dennison, 1994:14-15).

A lecturer does not always have control over the form in which the textbook is written in or the language used in the textbook, but the *choice of the textbook* is generally in the lecturer's hands. Lecturers in distance education have control over the study guides, or other forms of guidance that students use in conjunction with the textbooks. Any problems relating to text difficulty can be overcome by referring students to explanatory notes. Activating prior knowledge can for instance be done in the study guide before distance education students are referred to a part in their textbooks. Thus

students can for instance use only parts of a textbook and the parts with textual difficulties can be explained or rewritten in their study guides. It is the lecturer's responsibility to adapt sections of a textbook that may have text difficulties. By paying special attention to the text which students have to read and study lecturers could attempt to keep the students' interest.

Student motivation has been identified as having a positive impact on first language vocabulary acquisition; motivation is, however, equally *important in the second language context*. ESL students sometimes find themselves at a loss for words and as such they are often motivated to improve their vocabulary. They can be taught in explicit vocabulary lessons or by means of implicit instruction if the relationship between reading and the developing vocabulary is explained to them. If students are allowed to choose the words they would like to learn, this can serve as a motivating tool (Stoller and Grabe, 1993:38). Through access to literacy an ESL student's self-esteem is developed and maintained. ESL students must develop a personal sense of power over the written word, they must have the confidence to take risks and the willingness to construct their own meanings. In this way students' selfesteem and motivation can be enhanced (Altweger and Ivener, 1994:65-67). Empowerment in terms of communicative and learning skill enhancement is a valuable byproduct of improved study reading.

Lecturers are co-responsible for helping to motivate students and thus to ensure that they are affectively stabile. In the case of distance education students, it is not always possible to support students verbally. Affective support should therefore be incorporated into the study material, irrespective of what type of study material is used. The study material thus becomes meaningful to the reader. Greater comprehension increases retention of information and the ability to apply it in new situations.

## 4.9 SYNTHESIS

In this chapter the role of the lecturers in presenting content to distance education students was discussed. The importance of effective reading for comprehension was discussed in all the sections of the chapter, and it was clear that lecturers should regard themselves as the facilitators of their students' learning.

A distance education student's personal situation influences the learning process. Other factors influencing an adult student's learning were discussed. The role of reading in subject content was described, with reference to a student's interest in reading, purposes for reading, reading in forms of assessment and content-based reading. Various reading problems experienced by students were discussed.

Technology-based instruction, in contrast to traditional distance education, was referred to and special reference was made to computers and interactive communication, as well as computers and reading.

The emphasis in this chapter was on measures which lecturers of distance education could implement to improve and support the study reading skills and study reading strategies of their students. Special attention was given to the enhancement of students' comprehension of reading tasks, the teaching of various reading strategies and the control of texts in the various subjects. Examples taken from the texts which were supplied to distance education students at the University of South Africa, were used to verify and support certain viewpoints.

It is clear that distance education students are able to utilise many different reading strategies in order to be able to read and study texts in the various subjects. They should know that each reading task requires specific strategies, but they should also know how to adapt a reading strategy or various reading strategies in order to suit their

own personal learning styles, approaches to learning, as well as their personal, academic and learning environments.

In the next chapter chapter conclusions and recommendations of the study are presented, based on the findings of **Chapters 2, 3** and **4**. These findings are synthesised by means of a model (cf **figure 5.1**) and operationally explained in terms of suggested strategies for the effective instruction of study reading strategies.

# CHAPTER 5

# CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

## 5.1 SUMMARY

This study constitutes an attempt to address the problem of enhancing the study reading skills and strategies of distance education students who study at the tertiary level. It is argued in this investigation that every distance education student is a unique person with unique personality traits and unique abilities and preferences, such as a personal learning style, a personal learning strategy, personal learning experiences and a personal approach to learning, as well as the fact that each distance education student lives in a personal multidimensional environment (specifically in **Chapter 2**). Each study reading situation which can be presupposed in every subject necessitates specific and subject related reading strategies as are indicated, and special reference is made to study reading strategies and the theories underlying study reading (**Chapter 3**). **Chapter 4** indicates that when designing tutorial matter for their students, distance education lecturers should take both the uniqueness of each student, as well as the unique study reading strategies required in a specific section of subject content, into consideration.

### 5.1.1 Background to the problem

Reading is the main mode by means of which distance education students study. They should therefore have well-developed study reading skills and strategies.

It is established that many students studying at tertiary level, lack the necessary reading abilities to make a success of their studies. This has already been a matter of great concern among lecturers at tertiary level, for a number of years. Exacerbating

this problem, many students in South Africa study through the medium of English which is often their second or even a third language. The performance of many students is impeded by LEP and this explains why numerous South African students cannot develop their academic potential to the full.

Distance education students usually do not have the opportunity to attend courses in reading in order to improve their reading skills and strategies. Therefore the problem of a lack of appropriate reading and study reading skills and strategies can only be addressed by means of the study material which students receive. It should therefore be an intrinsic mandate of lecturers to design study material in such a way that it will support students to enhance their reading abilities. This can be achieved by building into the course material certain reading strategies, which may eventually enhance and further develop their students' reading skills..

### 5.1.2 The problem

Many students in South Africa have insufficiently developed study reading skills and strategies, and thus cannot develop their potential to the full. This leads to failure especially at tertiary level. When studying at a distance, this problem becomes even more accute since reading is the main mode of teaching and learning and therefore requires well-developed study reading skills and strategies as a prerequisite for successful study.

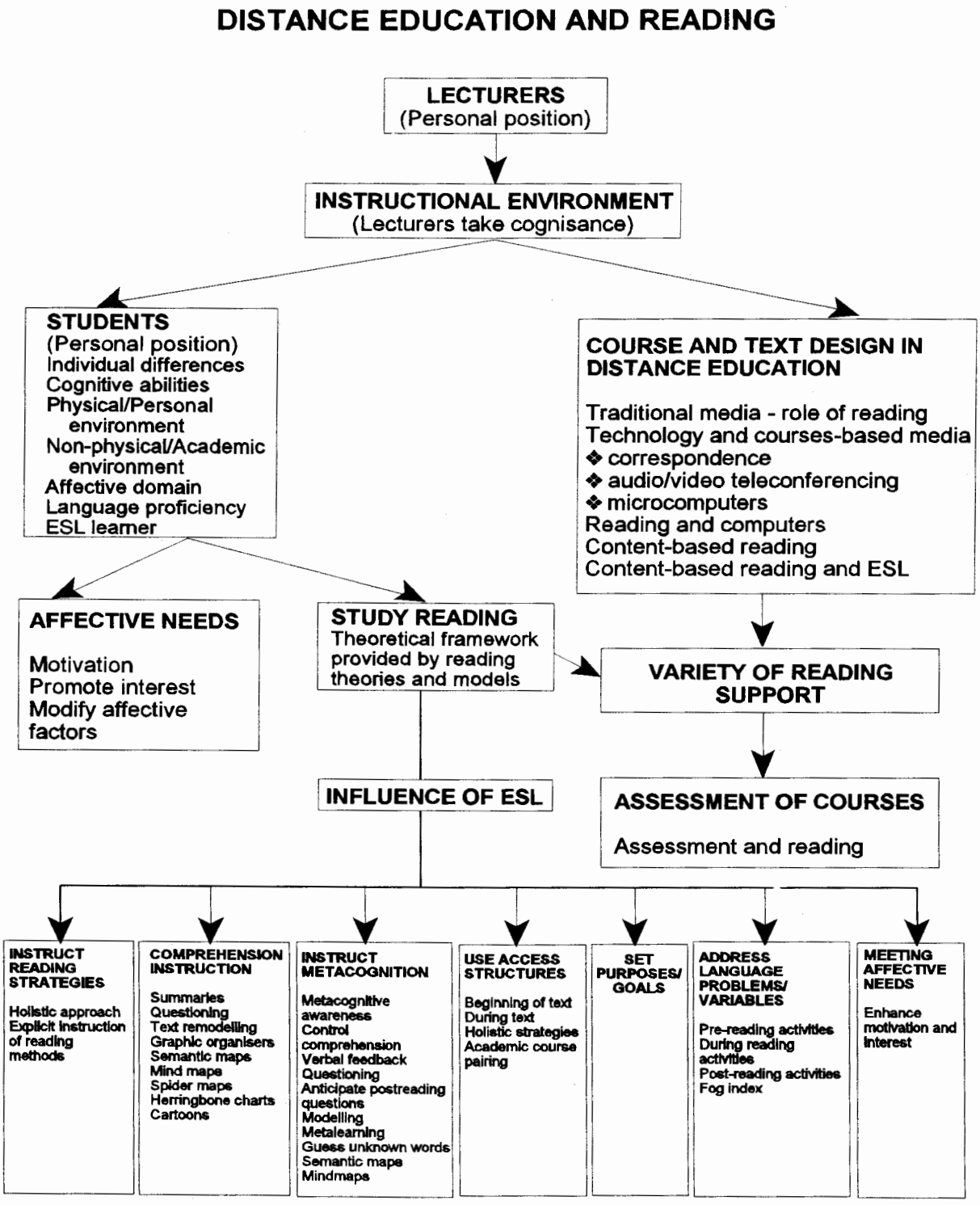
In spite of current modern distance education institutions changing, for example on account of electronic media, reading will always remain the main mode by means of which students study, and well-developed study reading skills and strategies remain the determinant for success when studying at a distance, even if students are able to utilise more advance technologies. Attending reading courses would naturally offer a solution to solve the lack of adequate study reading skills and strategies among many

students at tertiary level. This is, however, not a viable option in distance education, even with the introduction of new technological and instructional devices.

### 5.1.3 The investigation

In the first chapter an introductory orientation to the *lack of adequate study reading skills* displayed by students at tertiary level, which includes distance education students, is given. In the second chapter *a profile of the distance education student*, with special reference to the *heterogeneity of the student population*, is presented. The third chapter comprises an analysis of the theoretical frameworks of the *phenomena reading* and *study reading*, and the essential elements involved in study reading *are highlighted*. In the fourth chapter ways in which subject content can be opened up to distance education students are addressed, as well as ways in which distance education lecturers could support and enhance their students' study reading skills. In the fourth chapter the focus is also on supporting the affective needs of distance education students, because of the influence of the affective domain on the cognitive processes and eventually on study reading. The synthesis of the information leads to the *design of a model which could serve as a framework for the design of instructional material for distance education students, in order to enhance their study reading strategies and study reading skills.* This model represents the outcome of this research (cf **1.3 Aim of the study**).

Figure 5


DISTANCE EDUCATION AND READING
LECTURERS
(Personal position)
INSTRUCTIONAL ENVIRONMENT
(Lecturers take cognisance)
STUDENTS
(Personal position)
Individual differences
Cognitive abilities
Physical/Personal environment
Non-physical/Academic environment
Affective domain
Language proficiency
ESL learner
COURSE AND TEXT DESIGN IN DISTANCE EDUCATION
Traditional media - role of reading
Technology and courses-based media
❖ correspondence
❖ audio/video teleconferencing
❖ microcomputers
Reading and computers
Content-based reading
Content-based reading and ESL
AFFECTIVE NEEDS
Motivation
Promote interest
Modify affective factors
STUDY READING
Theoretical framework provided by reading theories and models
VARIETY OF READING SUPPORT
INFLUENCE OF ESL
ASSESSMENT OF COURSES
Assessment and reading
INSTRUCT READING STRATEGIES
Holistic approach
Explicit instruction of reading methods
COMPREHENSION INSTRUCTION
Summaries
Questioning
Text remodelling
Graphic organisers
Semantic maps
Mind maps
Spider maps
Herringbone charts
Cartoons
INSTRUCT METACOGNITION
Metacognitive awareness
Control comprehension
Verbal feedback
Questioning
Anticipate postreading questions
Modelling
Metalearning
Guess unknown words
Semantic maps
Mindmaps
USE ACCESS STRUCTURES
Beginning of text
During text
Holistic strategies
Academic course pairing
SET PURPOSES/ GOALS
ADDRESS LANGUAGE PROBLEMS/ VARIABLES
Pre-reading activities
During reading activities
Post-reading activities
Fog index
MEETING AFFECTIVE NEEDS
Enhance motivation and interest

From this model it is clear that if study reading strategies are taught to distance education students, their affective needs should also be addressed. *Study reading strategies should be taught explicitly* and a *holistic approach* should be the aim of the instruction of study reading strategies, irrespective of the choice of text design and the course content. By adopting *a holistic approach*, lecturers could make provision for the unique individual different needs of students, which includes cognitive ablities, as well as the uniqueness of specific subject content and text. Certain *study reading strategies such as asking questions, presenting semantic maps* and *drawing mind maps could be used for comprehension instruction, as well as for teaching metacognition.* This illustrates the value of a holistic approach to the teaching of study reading strategies. *ESL students* could be supported in their reading assignments by teaching them *specific strategies* and supplying *forms of support,* such as glossaries. The role of reading, in different forms of assessment, should also be utilised by lecturers.

## 5.2 CONCLUSION

### 5.2.1 Students' and lecturers' awareness and knowledge of appropriate study reading skills and study reading strategies

The importance and possibility of well-developed study reading skills and strategies for distance education students constitutes the centre around which the whole study revolved. Since reading represents the main means of assimilation in distance education, distance education students should know and should use study reading skills and strategies appropriate for every subject text to be studied. Students who do not have well-developed study reading skills, should be guided by lecturers to develop their study reading strategies with the idea of developing their own personal study reading skills, and *instructing of this should be integrated into the texts supplied to distance education students.* For ESL distance education students in particular, well-developed study reading skills and strategies are of vital importance for academic success.

### 5.2.2 The personal details of distance education students

In **Chapter 2** the heterogeneity of the distance education population was investigated. This leads to the realisation of the uniqueness of every distance education student and the knowledge that each student's personal profile and personal environment influence his or her academic success. The didactic principle of *individualisation* should therefore be part and parcel of distance education. *Lecturers should address individual differences among learners* (cf **2 .4 The cognitive domain** and **2.5 Influence of the student's environment**).

### 5.2.3 Knowledge of the theoretical framework underlying study reading

Various reading models and reading theories, as well as the essential aspects involved in study reading, are investigated in **Chapter 3**. *The instructional implications which are deduced from the reading theories, reading models and essential aspects of study reading are most relevant to instruction by distance education lecturers.* These instructional implications are consequently addressed in the various sections of **4.8** (**Distance education lecturers and student study reading**).

### 5.2.4 The importance of the ways in which subject content is disclosed to distance education students

#### 5.2.4.1 Subject content and the text in distance education

Subject content is offered in various forms to distance education students. Distance education has gone through three generations of technologies (correspondence communication, audio and video teleconferencing and computers) and it appears that the use of the third generation technology, microcomputers, is increasing. Irrespective

of what type of technology is used, reading will always be an important skill and *lecturers will always have the responsibilty to ensure that the text which students use, is accessible, clear and ESL reader friendly.*

### 5.2.4.2 Reading strategies

Students should have a variety of reading strategies from which they can choose, when they read and study. The choice of reading strategies is influenced by the requirements of the reading task, the type of subject content to be studied and students' personal learning styles and approaches to learning. It is therefore the task of lecturers to teach their students *a variety of appropriate reading strategies explicitly.* For distance education students, the instruction of reading strategies should be part of the texts to be studied. There should thus be integration of appropriate study and reading strategies into the text content, by for instance expecting of students to summarise, to identify key words, to formulate their own questions or to draw some kind of graphic representation at regular intervals.

### 5.2.4.3 Comprehension and reading

Lecturers should see their role as that of mediators who help students to facilitate the understanding of the texts to be studied. Students, including *distance education students, should be offered instruction on various strategies which might help them to comprehend better what they are reading and studying.* Ideally, these study reading strategies should eventually become the students' personal study reading skills.

### 5.2.4.4 Metacognition and reading

Students should be taught various strategies which would enhance their metacognition during the reading process, and be encouraged to use these strategies *consciously* to offer a control for their understanding of texts. *Instruction on the use of metacognition*

*as part of the cognitive processes should be provided in the texts provided to distance education students.*

#### 5.2.4.5 Purposes and goals for reading

Presenting purposes and goals, are important for comprehension monitoring and metacognitive awareness during the reading process. *Distance education students should therefore receive direct instruction in strategies to set goals for reading and studying.*

#### 5.2.4.6 Access structures for study reading

Various access structures could be included into texts to help students to understand the meaning of texts. *Suggestions on how distance education students could use access structures as aids to learning, should be provided throughout texts, which are supplied to these students.*

#### 5.2.4.7 Language related variables and reading

There are various language related variables which could impede the progress and performance of students (especially ESL students), from making full use of syntactic, semantic and discourse cues when reading and studying. *Various forms of support, such as structured overviews, provision of background knowledge or a glossary should therefore be provided in texts to be read and studied, in order to help distance education students to make the texts more understandable.* Distance education lecturers should also pay special attention to the language used in forms of assessment, especially in examinations, to ensure that students understand what they read.

### 5.2.5 The role of distance education lecturers

The human cognitive processes are strongly influenced by affective factors. Distance education lecturers therefore have an important role to play in enhancing a positive affective state. For study purposes, *motivation* and *interest* in the subject content, are two major affective forces, and these should be engendered by lecturers. Doing this may actually ensure students' academic progress and their final success.

## 5.3 RECOMMENDATIONS AND IMPLICATIONS OF THE RECOMMENDATIONS

### 5.3.1 Recommendations and implications of the recommendations concerning students' knowledge of study reading strategies

Distance education students should be made aware of the necessity of well-developed study reading skills and strategies, and that these could help them to make a success of their studies. These students usually realise that their studies are mainly conducted by means of reading, but they are not always aware how important well-developed study reading stategies are for their academic success.

Students should be made aware that each subject has its own unique subject specific reading strategies, and furthermore that they should actually adapt their reading strategies to fit in with the demands of a specific subject they are studying. Students should also realise that each academic department or faculty has its specific activities which are unique (for instance the teaching of mathematics compared to the teaching of chemistry), and that these activities have an impact on students' learning.

Students should be made aware that every person has his or her own personal learning strategies and that these learning strategies are related to reading strategies. Learning

strategies could for instance include underlining, summarising, concept mapping, paraphrasing and repetition which in turn could be used as well-developed reading strategies. Students should also know that certain strategies could be used as metacognitive reading strategies.

Distance education students who have to rely on reading as the only way of gaining information, may experience difficulty with certain aspects of subject content, because lecturers or tutors are not available to explain these to them. Students may, for instance, have little knowledge of a subject and therefore they might find it difficult to generate predictions when, during reading, they do not understand particular words or concepts. If only the top-down models of reading are considered, it is clear that distance education students should be supported to ensure that they understand what they have to read and study.

### 5.3.2 Recommendations and implications of the recommendations for instructional purposes

Instead of trying to compensate for the loss of personal direct communication, lecturers should direct their energies towards devising means to enhance distance education *students' motivation* and *interest* in their studies. Distance education lecturers should therefore ensure that they also make provision for the *affective support* of their students. The *important didactic principle of motivation* should underlie all contact with distance education students and should be included in all forms of instruction.

Lecturers at distance education institutions should bear it in mind that every student they teach, is a unique person with unique needs and unique abilities. In the tutorial package supplied to students, provision should thus be made for individual needs, requirements, prior experiences and interests of students and the *didactic principle of individualisation* should be kept in mind in all forms of instruction.

Suggestions for ways in which students' reading and studying skills could be enhanced, should be included in the tutorial packages of students. Lecturers should have a thorough understanding of the language problems which students may experience, and especially of the required reading strategies unique to the subject content which they teach. Distance education lecturers should select the study reading strategies which are appropriate to the subject content which they are teaching, and these study reading strategies should be presented explicitly to students. The following study reading strategies are brought to the fore in **Chapter 4**, and they could serve as examples of study reading strategies which could be selected, depending on the type of subject content which distance education students have to master:

- ESL students could especially benefit from a *holistic approach to reading strategies*: The use of holistic reading strategies is widely accepted as the most efficient way to develop and enhance second language usage, which includes study reading.
- *Reading methods*: Various reading methods such as skimming and scanning, the PARS method, the SQ3R method and the PANORAMA method could be taught as reading strategies to students.
- *Reading comprehension*: Comprehension lies at the heart of all reading and most of the reading theories. Lecturers should act as mediators who support students to construct understanding of the texts they have to read and study. Various study reading strategies could be taught to students to help them with reading comprehension. Reading strategies should be adapted according to the text. The following are examples of reading strategies which could enhance reading comprehension:
    - various schematic representations;
    - provision of background knowledge;
    - forms of summaries, for example: association, drawings, summaries from a section of reading, mindmaps, chronological networking, theme charts and classification networks;

- various forms of questioning;
- graphic organisers, for example: timelines, H-maps, flow charts, graphs, linear outlines, semantic mapping, mindmaps, spider maps, herringbone charts and cartoons.

- *Metacognition and reading*: Lecturers should encourage their students to use well-known reading strategies such as planning, regulating, evaluating, summarising, questioning, clarifying and predicting, consciously as metacognitive reading strategies. Metacognition can be reported and students should be made aware of the use of metacognition in the study reading process. Lecturers should discuss and demonstrate knowledge about cognition and metacognition in a teaching situation. The uses of metacognition in the reading and studying process could be supplied within the texts of distance education students. The following are ways in which metacognition and study reading could be explained to distance education students:
  - using verbal feedback;
  - analysing the reading task at hand;
  - questioning;
  - anticipation of possible post-reading questions;
  - modelling;
  - metalearning instruction;
  - guessing of unknown words in the text;
  - semantic mapping or mindmapping, and
  - making use of experience-text-relationships.
- *Setting purposes and goals for reading*: Students should be provided with direct instruction in strategies to set goals for reading comprehension.
- *The use of access structures for comprehension and study reading purposes*: Access structures which could help students to read and learn texts better, could be inserted at the beginning, during or at the end of texts. Tables of

content, headings or academic course pairing, could for instance be used as an access structure to text.

- *Ways in which language related variables and problems in reading could be addressed*: A lack of the necessary background knowledge which could impede comprehension during the reading process, could be addressed in various prereading activities, for example semantic maps, brainstorming and structured overviews. Other pre-reading activities could include pre-viewing the text to find out what may be in the text from: headings, subheadings, boldfaced words, margin notes, questions at the end of a chapter and illustrations. During reading, guides and activities to reinforce and introduce vocabulary could be used. Writing by means of using organisational patterns, could serve as post-reading activity. Special attention should be paid to vocabulary, and new or unknown vocabulary could be introduced in various ways to distance education students. Students should also be supported to understand the subject specific language of subjects, for example specific terminological clarification, and the reading skills required to study the various subjects.
- *Enhancing affective factors during reading*: Affective support should be included in all forms of study material which are supplied to distance education students. Various ways in which students could be motivated to read and study, as well as ways in which students' interest in the text could be enhanced, should form part of the text design and content of the texts supplied to students.

### 5.3.3 Recommendations and implications of the recommendations concerning course material in distance education

The lack of appropriate study reading strategies which distance education students may have, can only be addressed in the course material which they receive. It is therefore abundantly clear that course material should be designed in such a way that makes provision for the teaching of various forms of study reading strategies. It is recommended that a variety of study reading strategies should be included to enable students to select study reading strategies which fit their personal learning styles and preferences. Students should also know that the study reading strategies of various subjects differ and they should become flexible in adapting their study orientations to different subjects or learning areas.

It is further recommended that all types of reading support which distance education students do receive, should be incorporated in the tutorial matter which they receive. Academic pairing (providing academic content and a paired ESL course simultaneously) is one way in which students could be supported with the idea to enhance their study reading abilities.

### 5.3.4 Recommendations and implications of the recommendations concerning modes of assessment and student reading

Students, and especially ESL students with LEP, should be supported by ensuring that they are not confronted with unknown vocabulary when they are assessed. These unknown words and concepts are usually subject specific vocabulary, background knowledge and lexical terms. Any terms used, should be contextualised to enable students to communicate meaningfully in terms of a holistic framework. Lecturers should also keep it in mind that, during assessment, ESL students should not be

penalised due to a lack of time, because often ESL readers read more slowly than their first language counterparts.

### 5.3.5 Recommendation and implications of the recommendations concerning affective support for distance education students

It is not possible for distance education lecturers to support their students personally or verbally. Affective support should therefore be incorporated into the tutorial packages of distance education students. It is especially important to enhance distance education students' interest in the texts which they have to study by providing open-ended questions and activities and by allowing choice of text or activity. Lecturers should also reinforce their students' motivation to read and study by using positive comments and encouragement.

## 5.4 FUTURE RESEARCH

During the course of the investigation, this researcher became aware of many areas concerning distance education students and their study reading skills which urgently require investigation. Some of the areas were briefly touched on in this study, but require further indepth research. Initiating specific research in the areas mentioned should be of educational value for South Africa at this point in time, since the country is facing many challenges in all spheres of life, and the need for a well-developed work force increases. Distance education will have a major role to play in the training of a productive future work force.

The following themes require further research:

- an investigation into the pedagogy of study reading within the South African context;
- an investigation into the influence of technology on the reading process;

- an investigation into all the dimensions regarding the influence of the affective factors in the reading process;
- an investigation into all the needs, and specifically the academic needs, of distance education students in South Africa;
- an investigation into the academic needs of learners who are studying at tertiary level through the medium of English as a second language;
- an investigation into the training of distance education lecturers with the view of sensitising them to the needs of their students, and specifically training them to address the study reading needs of their students by applying certain practices in their development of learning materials.

## 5.5 CONCLUDING REMARKS

This investigation comprises an exploratory study into the problem of applying appropriate study reading skills in distance education. Distance education students should be supported by empathetic lecturers and excellent study materials in their (often difficult) quest for higher learning. As lifelong learners they represent the focus of the new system in South Africa, which supports adult education and lifelong learning with a view to maximising the knowledge, skills and habits of mind of all learners in this country. Only a learner-centered, skill-oriented and holistic approach to study reading can raise the general educational level in this country.

# BIBLIOGRAPHY

Adey, AD, Gous, HT, Heese, M & Le Roux, AI. 1996. *Distance education: study guide for AFTOND-V.* Pretoria: University of South Africa.

Adey, D, Heese, M & Le Roux, AI. (compilers) 1990. *Distance education: the challenge.* Pretoria: University of South Africa.

Adey, D, Steyn, P, Herman, N & Scholtz, G. (eds). 1994. *State of the art in higher education, Volume 1.* Pretoria: University of South Africa.

Alexander, JE & Heathington, BS. 1988. *Assessing and correcting classroom reading problems.* Illinois: Scott, Foresman/Little, Brown College Division.

Alexander, PA & Murphy, PK. 1998. Profiling the differences in students' knowledge, interest, and strategic processing. *Journal of Educational Psychology* 90(3):435-447.

Altwerger, B & Ivener, BL. 1994. Self-esteem: Access to literacy in multicultural and multilingual classrooms, in *Kids come in all languages: reading instruction for ESL students,* edited by Spangenberg-Urbschaft, K & Pritchard, R. Newark: International Reading Association: 65-81.

African National Congress (ANC). 1994. *Discussion document: A policy framework for education and training.* Braamfontein: ANC.

Anderson, TH. 1979. Study skills and learning strategies, in *Cognitive and affective learning strategies,* edited by O'Neil, HF & Spielberger, CD. New York: Academic Press: 77-98.

Ardington, EM. 1992. *The implications of current conditions and constraints on policy proposals for the provision of education in rural Natal/Kwazulu.* Durban: University of Natal.

Armbruster, BB, Anderson, TH & Ostertag, J. 1989. Teaching text structure to improve reading and writing. *The Reading Teacher* 43(2):130-137.

Armbruster, BC, Echols, CH & Brown, A. 1983. *The role of metacognition in reading to learn: a developmental perspective.* Urbana-Champaigne: Center for the Study of Reading, University of Illinois.

Armbruster, JE & Heathington, BS. 1988. *Assessing and correcting classroom problems.* Illinois: Scott, Foresman/Little, Brown College Division.

Athey, I. 1985. Reading research in the affective domain, in *Theoretical models and processing of reading*, third edition, edited by Singer, H & Ruddell, RB. Newark: International Reading Association: 527-557.

Barker, K & Lonsdale, R. (eds). 1994. *Skills for life? The meaning and value of literacy.* London: Taylor Graham Publishing.

Barkhuizen, GP. 1995. Setting examinations: implications for English second language speakers. *SAVTO/SAALT Journal for Language Teaching* 29(2):110-119.

Barr, R, Kamil, ML, Mosenthal, P & Pearson, PD. (eds). 1991. *Handbook of reading research, Volume II.* New York: Longman.

Barrow, R & Milburn, G. 1990. *A critical dictionary of educational concepts.* New York: Harvester Wheatsheaf.

Barry, D. 1995. Standards and fairness in language testing. *HSRC/RGN in Focus*. 3(2):8-14.

Beaudoin, MF, Dillon, C, Blanchard, D, Gibson, CC, Woudstra, A, Murgatroyd, S & Wright, SJ.(eds). 1991. *Distance education symposium: selected papers, Part 1.* Papers presented at the second American symposium on research in distance education, Pennsylvania State University, Pennsylvania.

Behr, A. 1982. Efficient reading. *Bulletin for Academic Staff* 3(2):26-33.

Bergh, A-M, Van Wyk, N, Lemmer, E, Van der Linde, N & Van Niekerk, P. 1996. Distance learners and their experience of text. *South African Journal of Higher Education* 10(2):169-174.

Bernhardt, B. 1994. Reading and writing between the lines: an interactive approach using computers. *Journal of Reading* 37(6):458-486.

Bernt, FM & Bugbee, AC. 1993. Study practices and attitudes related to academic success in a distance learning programme. *Distance Education* 14(1):97-111.

Biggs, JB. 1969. Coding and cognitive behaviour. *British Journal of Educational Psychology* 60:287-305.

Biggs, JB. 1988. The role of metacognition in enhancing learning. *Australian Journal of Education* 32(2):127-138.

Biggs, JB. 1989. Approaches to the enhancement of tertiary learning. *Higher Education Research and Development* 8(1):7-25.

Blake, ME & Majors, PL. 1995. Recycled words: holistic instruction for LEP students. *Journal for Adolescent and Adult Literacy* 39(2):132-137.

Block, E. 1986. The comprehension strategies of second language readers. *Tesol Quarterly* 20(3):463-491.

Boak, RT, Kompf, M & Boak, CJ. 1994. An adult education program: utilizing multimedia resources for distance delivery. Paper presented at the international conference: Innovations in education - significance to teaching and learning, 17-19 October 1994, University of Science, Penang, Malaysia.

Bonds, CW & Sida, D. 1993. A reading paradigm to meet the needs of all students. *Reading Improvement* 30(1):2-8.

Booyse, JJ. 1987. Distance education and learning: joyful realization or frustrated expectation? *Distance Education conference papers 1, 18-21 May 1987*, University of South Africa, Pretoria.

Brookfield, S. (ed). 1988. *Training educators of adults*. London: Routledge.

Brown, AL. 1985. Metacognition: the development of selective attention strategies for learning from texts, in Singer, H & Ruddell, RB. (eds). *Theoretical models and processes of reading*. Newark: International Reading Association: 501-526.

*Building a brighter future Curriculum 2005.* Questions and answers for learners, educators, parents and governing bodies. 1997. Pretoria: Department of Education.

Burge, EJ. 1986. Andragogy in distance education. *Education for librarianship: Australia* 3(1):13-26.

Burge, L. 1988. Beyond andragogy: some explorations for distance learner design. *Journal of Distance Education* 3(1):5-23.

Buzan, T. 1983. *Use both sides of your brain.* New York: E.P. Dutton.

Carr, TH & Levy, BA. 1990. *Reading and its development.* San Diego: Academic Press, Inc.

Carrell, PL. 1989. Metacognitive awareness and second language reading. *The Modern Language Journal* 73(ii):121-130.

Carrell, PL. 1992. Some causes of text-boundedness and schema interference in ESL reading, in *Interactive approaches to second language reading*, edited by Carrell, PL, Devine, J & Eskey, DE. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press: 101-113.

Carrell, PL, Devine, J & Eskey, DE. (eds). 1992. *Interactive approaches to second language reading.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Carrell, PL & Eisterhold, JC. 1992. Schema theory and ESL reading pedagogy, in *Interactive approaches to second language reading*, edited by Carrell, PL, Devine, J & Eskey, DE. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press: 73-92.

Carrell, PL, Pharis, BG & Loberto, JC. 1989. Metacognitive strategy training for ESL reading. *Tesol Quarterly* 23(4): 647-669.

Cartwright, GP. 1994. Distance learning a different time, a different place. *Change* July/August 1994:30-32.

Casanave, CP. 1988. Comprehension monitoring in ESL reading: a neglected essential. *Tesol Quarterly* 22(2):283-298.

Central Statistical Services 1994. *Provincial Statistics, CSS Report No. 00-90-10, Part 10.* Pretoria: Department of Central Statistical Services.

Cheek, EH & Cheek, MC. 1983. *Reading instruction through content teaching.* Columbus: Charles E Merril Publishing Company.

Cloete, N & Shochet, I. 1986. Alternatives to the behavioural technicist conception of study skills. *Higher Education* 15:247-258.

Coady, J, Magoto, J, Hubbard, P, Graney, J & Mokhtari, K. 1993. High frequency vocabulary and reading proficiency in ESL readers, in *Second language reading and vocabulary learning*, edited by Huckin, T, Haynes, M & Coady, J. Norwood: Ablex Publishing Corporation: 217-226.

*Committee on Teacher Education Policy (COTEP).* 1994. *Discussion document: norms and standards and governance structures for teacher education.* Pretoria: Department of Education.

Council of Ministers of Education, Canada. 1993. *The impact of information and communications technologies on postsecondary education.* Occasional Paper 2. Toronto: CMEC.

Court, S. 1989. Language proficiency and academic success. *Bulletin for Academic Staff* 10(1):53-61.

Cronjé, GJ, Le Roux, WJ, Reed, JA & Van Helden, MJ. 1998. *Introduction to the economic and management environment: study guide 2 for INM101-3.* Pretoria: University of South Africa.

Cropley, AJ. 1985. Motivation for participation in adult education, in *Motivation for adult education,* edited by Knoll, JH. Bonn: German Commission for UNESCO: 22-34.

Crous, SFM. 1994. Kognitiewe ontwikkeling, tersiêre onderrig en leerprobleme, in *State of the art in higher education, Volume 1*, edited by Adey, D, Steyn, P, Herman, N & Scholtz, G. Pretoria: University of South Africa: 153-161.

Cummins, J. 1984a. *Bilingualism and special education issues in assessment and pedagogy*. Avon: Multilingual Matters.

Cummins, J. 1984b. Wanted: a theoretical framework for relating language proficiency to academic achievement among bilingual students, in *Language proficiency and academic achievement*, edited by Rivera, C. Avon: Multilingual Matters: 2-19.

Cummins, J. 1994. The acquisition of English as a second language, in *Kids come in all languages: reading instruction for ESL students* edited by Spangenberg-Urbschaft, K & Pritchard, R. Newark: International Reading Association: 36-62.

Cunningham, JW & Wall, LK. 1994. Teaching good readers to comprehend better. *Journal of Reading* 37(6):480-486.

De Beer, KJ. 1994. A form of distance (contact) education at the Technikon OFS in the Free State, Qwaqwa and Northern Cape, in *State of the Art in Higher Education, Volume 1*, edited by Adey, D, Steyn, P, Herman, N & Scholtz, G. Pretoria: University of South Africa: 171-180.

Dejnozka, EL & Kapel, DE. 1991. *American educators' encyclopedia*. New York: Greenwood Press.

Delors, J. 1996. *Learning: the treasure within*. Paris: UNESCO.

Department of Education. 1996. *Understanding the National Qualifications Framework.* Pretoria.

Department of Education. 1997a. *Norms and standards for teacher education, training and development: discussion document.* Technical committee on the revision of norms and standards for teacher education. Pretoria.

Department of Education. 1997b. *Report of the national committee on further education. A framework for the transformation of further education and training in South Africa.* Pretoria.

Department of Education. 1998a. *Norms and standars for educators.* Pretoria.

Department of Education. 1998b. *Number of enrolled university students for 1995-1997.* Pretoria.

Department of National Education. 1992. *Teaching renewal strategy.* Pretoria.

Department of National Education. 1994. *Preliminary education statistics for 1987-1994.* Pretoria.

Derry, SJ. 1989. Putting learning strategies to work. *Educational Leadership* 46(4): 4-10.

Dickerman, W. 1988. Objectives for graduate programmes in adult education, in *Training educators of adults,* edited by Brookfield, S. London: Routledge: 245-265.

Dillon, C & Blanchard, D. 1992. Education for each: learner driven distance education, in *Distance education symposium: selected papers,* Part 1. Papers presented at the

second American symposium on research in distance education. American center for the study of distance education, Pennsylvania State University, Pennsylvania.

Dillon, CL, Gunawardena, CN & Parker, R. 1992. Learner support: the critical link in distance education. *Distance Education* 13(1):29-45.

*Distance education conference papers 1, 2, 5 and 6, 18-21 May 1987*, University of South Africa, Pretoria.

Dole, JA, Duffy, GG, Roehler, LR & Pearson, PD. 1991. Moving from the old to the new: research on reading comprehension instruction. *Review of Educational Research* 61(2):239-264.

Dowling, F. 1997. *English communication for literature: study guide 3 for PEN100-3.* Pretoria: University of South Africa.

Doyle, W & Rutherford, B. 1984. Classroom research on matching learning and teaching styles. *Theory into Practice* 23(1):20-25.

Dreyer, C. 1995. Identifying English second language learning problems in multilingual classrooms at university. *SAVTO/SAALT Journal for Language Teaching* 29(4):285-296.

Duffy, G, Roehler, L & Rackliffe, G. 1987. How teachers' instructional talk influences students' understanding of lesson content. *Elementary School Journal* 87(1):3-16.

Dunn, R. 1984. Learning style: state of the science. *Theory into Practice* 23(1):10-19.

Du Preez, A. (ed). 1999. Memos newsletter of the Bureau of University Teaching, 03. Pretoria: University of South Africa.

Dwyer, F. 1991. A paradigm for generating curriculum design oriented research questions in distance education in *Report on the second American symposium on research in distance education, May 22-24, 1991.* American center for the study of distance education, Pennsylvania State University, Pennsylvania:24-25.

Early, M. 1991. Major research programs, in Flood, J, Jensen, JM, Lapp, D & Squire, JR. (eds). *Handbook of research on teaching the English language arts.* New York: Macmillan Publishing Company:143-158.

Entwistle, N & Waterston, S. 1988. Approaches to studying and levels of processing in university students. *British Journal of Educational Psychology* 58:258-265.

Farnan, N, Flood, J & Lapp, D. 1994. Comprehending through reading and writing: six research-based instructional strategies, in *Kids come in all languages: reading instruction for ESL students,* edited by Spangenberg-Urbschaft, K & Pritchard, R. Newark: International Reading Association:135-157.

Fischer, BB & Fischer, L. 1979. Styles in teaching and learning. *Educational Leadership* 36(4):245-251.

Fitzgerald, J. 1983. Helping readers gain self-control over reading comprehension. *The Reading Teacher* 37(1):249-253.

Flanagan, W. 1995. *Reading and writing in junior classes.* Cape Town: Maskew Miller Longman.

Flood, J, Jensen, JM, Lapp, D & Squire, JR. (eds). 1991. *Handbook of research on teaching the English language arts.* New York: Macmillan Publishing Company.

Forget, MA & Morgan, RF. 1997. A brain-compatible learning environment for improving student metacognition. *Reading Improvement* 34(4):161-175.

Fraser, WJ & Nieman, MM. (eds). 1995. *The knowledge accessing modes, performance determinants and instructional preferences of first year students at eight major distance education institutions in South Africa.* Pretoria: University of South Africa.

Gaganakis, PS. 1992. Language and ethnic group relations in non-racial schools. *The English Academy Review* 9:46-55.

Gambrell, LB. 1996. Creating classroom cultures that foster reading motivation. *The Reading Teacher* 50(1):14-25.

Gibson, CC & Graff, AO. 1992. Impact of adults' preferred learning styles and perception of barriers on completion of external Baccalaureate degree programs. *Journal of Distance Education* VII(1):39-51.

Gous, H. 1987. A student services unit in a distance education institution. *Distance education conference papers 5, 18-21 May 1987.* University of South Africa, Pretoria.

Gow, L, Kemper, D & Chow, R. 1991. The effects of English language ability on approaches to learning. *RELC Journal: A Journal of Language Teaching and Research in Southeast Asia* 22(1):49-68.

Gräbe, I. 1987. Taking a positive view of the (dis)advantages of distance education: reading skills, writing skills and theory of literature, in *Distance Education Conference Papers 2, 18-21 May 1987.* University of South Africa, Pretoria.

Greyling, ESG. 1991. 'n Strategie vir die implementering van afstandsonderwys aan residensiële universiteite - deel 1. *Randse Afrikaanse Universiteit Bulletin vir Dosente* 23(1):1-6.

Griesel, H & Bradbury, J. 1994. Text as impetus for learning, in *State of the Art in Higher Education, Volume 1*, edited by Adey, D, Steyn, P, Herman, N & Scholtz, G. Pretoria: University of South Africa: 323-331.

Grové, S. 1990. *Thank you, brain.* Cape Town: Human & Rousseau.

Guskin, AE. 1994. Restructuring the role of the faculty. *Change* September/ October:16-25.

Guthrie, JT. 1996. Educational contexts for engagement in literacy. *The Reading Teacher* 49(6):432-445.

Guthrie, JT, Schafer, W, Wang, YY & Afflerbach, P. 1995. Relationships of instruction to amount of reading: an exploration of social, cognitive, and instructional connections. *Reading Research Quarterly* 30(1):8-25.

Hadaway, NL & Young, TA. 1994. Content literacy and language learning: instructional decisions. *The Reading Teacher* 47(7):522-527.

Harris, K. 1998. *Activity book: tutorial letter 103/98 (History 1).* Pretoria: University of South Africa.

Harrison, CJ. 1990. Metacognition and motivation. *Reading Improvement* 28(1): 34-40.

Hayes, DA & Diehl, W. 1982. What research on prose comprehension suggests for college skills instruction. *Journal of Reading* 25(7):656-661.

Haynes, D. 1993. Patterns and perils of guessing in second language reading, in *Second Language Reading and Vocabulary Learning,* edited by Huckin, T, Hayes, M & Coady, J. Norwood: Ablex Publishing Corporation: 46-60.

Heese, M. 1994. Developing customized reading skills materials through action research: a pilot study report, in *State of the Art in Higher Education, Volume 1*, edited by Adey, D, Steyn, P, Herman, N & Scholtz, G. Pretoria: University of South Africa: 332-340.

Hendrix, T & Hulshof, H. 1994. *Leesvaardigheid Nederlands omgaan met zakelijke teksten.* Bussum: Dick Coutinho.

Hiola, Y & Moss, D. 1990. Characteristics of distance learners at the Universitas Terbuka Indonesia. *Distance Education* 11(1):116-124.

Holmberg, B. 1986. Improving study skills for distance students. *Open learning* 1(3):29-33.

Hough, M. 1984. Motivation of adults: implications of adult learning theories for distance education. *Distance Education* 5(1):7-23.

Howard, DC. 1985. Reading and study skills and the distance learner. *Distance Education* 6(2):169-188.

Huckin, T, Haynes, M & Coady, J. (eds). 1993. *Second language reading and vocabulary learning*. Norwood: Ablex Publishing Corporation.

Hugo, AJ. 1991. Help jou leerlinge om hulle wiskundeteks te lees. *Pythagoras* 27: 36-40.

Hunt, LC. 1997. The effect of self-selection, interest, and motivation upon independent, instructional, and frustrational levels. *The Reading Teacher* 50(4):278-282.

Iannone, PV. 1998. Just beyond the horizon: Writing-centered literacy activities for tradtional and electronic contexts. *The Reading Teacher* 51(5):438-443.

Jacobowitz, T. 1990. AIM: a metacognitive strategy for constructing the main idea of text. *Journal of Reading* 33(8):620-624.

Jacobs, JE & Paris, SG. 1987. Children's metacognition about reading: issues in definition, measurement and instruction. *Educational Psychologist* 22(3&4):255-278.

Jardine, RW. 1986. The language skills of the academically vulnerable university student. *South African Journal for Education* 6(1):57-63.

Jonassen, DH & Grabowski, BL. 1993. *Handbook of individual differences, learning, and instruction.* New Jersey: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates.

Jones, B & Johnson, R. 1990. *Making the grade. Volume 1: Reading and learning.* Manchester: Manchester University Press.

Kang, H. 1994. Helping second language readers learn from content area text through collaboration and support. *Journal of Reading* 37(8):646-652.

Kasper, LF. 1994a. Developing and teaching a content-based reading course for ESL students. *Teaching English in the Two-Year College* 22(1):23-26.

Kasper, LF. 1994b. Improved reading performance for ESL students through academic course pairing. *Journal of Reading* 37(5):376-384.

Kilfoil, WR. 1993. Text in an ESL context. *SAVTO/SAALT Journal for Language Teaching* 27(1):1-9.

Kim, YH & Goetz, ET. 1994. Context effects on word recognition and reading comprehension of poor and good readers: a test of the interactive-compensatory hypothesis. *Reading Research Quaterly* 29(1):179-187.

Knoll, JH. (ed). 1985. *Motivation for adult education.* Bonn: German Commission for UNESCO.

Kolb, DA. 1984. *Experiential learning experience as the source of learning and development.* Englewood Cliffs: Prentice-Hall.

Kotze, P. 1990. Implementing computer-aided instruction in distance education: an infrastructure, in *Distance education: the challenge* compiled by Adey, D, Heese, M & Le Roux, AI. Pretoria: University of South Africa:108-129.

LaBerge, D & Samuels, SJ. 1985. Toward a theory of automatic information processing in reading, in *Theoretical models and processes of reading,* third edition, edited by Singer, H & Ruddell, RB. Newark: International Reading Association: 689-718.

Lapp, D & Flood, J. 1983. *Teaching reading to every child.* New York: Macmillan Publishing Co.

Lapp, D, Flood, J & Martin, DB. 1998. Teacher online: using personal visual literacy skills to enhance professional teaching knowledge. *The Reading Teacher* 51(8):702-705.

Laurin, P. 1991. An adapted model of distance education for developing countries. *International Council for Distance Education Bulletin* 26:37-45.

Lemmer, E & Squelch, J. 1993. *Multicultural education: a teacher's manual.* Halfway House: Southern Book Publishers.

Lemmer, EM. 1995. Selected linguistic realities in South African schools: problems and prospects. *Educare* 24(2):82-96.

Lemmer, EM, Bergh, A, Van der Linde, N, Van Niekerk, P & Van Wyk, N. 1995. *Distance learners and their experience of text.* Executive summary. Pretoria: University of South Africa.

Le Roux, C. 1995. Die voltydse, swart, vroeg-volwasse Unisa-student. *Progressio* 17(1):140-157.

Leu, DJ. 1997. Caity's question: literacy as deixes on the Internet. *Reading Teacher* 51(1):62-67.

Lippitt, L. 1991. Teaching with style: implementing a learning style approach at the Santa Fe Indian School. Paper presented at the 11th International Seminar in Teacher Education, April 1991, Panama City, Florida.

Luckett, K. 1995. The production of mediating texts: a form of staff development? *SAVTO/SAALT Journal for Language Teaching* 29(1):34-44.

Malan, SF, Carruthers, EJ & Theron, BM. 1996. *History of South Africa 1806-1902: study guide 1 for HST202-S (History 2).* Pretoria: University of South Africa.

Mansfield, DL & Murrell, P. 1991. The use of student learning styles in teaching world politics. *Innovative Higher Education* 15(2):127-136.

Marland, P, Patching, W, Putt, I & Putt, R. 1990. Distance learners' interactions with text while studying. *Distance Education* 11(1):71-91.

Marshall, C & Roos, HJ. 1997. *English communication for education: study guide 5 for PEN100-3 (Practical English)*. Pretoria: University of South Africa.

Marton, F. 1975. On non-verbatim learning: I. level of processing and level of outcome. *Scandinavian Journal of Psychology* 16:273-279.

Marton, F & Svensson, L. 1979. Conceptions of research in student learning. *Higher Education* 8:471-486.

Mathewson, GC. 1985. Toward a comprehensive model of affect in the reading process, in *Theoretical models and processes of reading*, third edition, edited by Singer, H & Ruddell, RB. Newark: International Reading Association: 841-856.

May, FB. 1994. *Reading as communication*, fourth edition. New York: Maxwell Macmillan International.

McKenna, MC & MacLarty, AH. 1987. Secondary reading: Black South Africa. *Journal of Reading* 31(1):45-48.

McLain, KV. 1991. Metacognition in reading comprehension: what it is and strategies for instruction. *Reading Improvement* 28(3):169-172.

Moore, GAB. 1991. Course design and communication technology in distance education in *Report on the second American symposium on research in distance*

*education, May 22-24 1991*. American center for the study of distance education, Pennsylvania State University, Pennsylvania:26.

Morgan, A. 1991. *Research into student learning in distance education.* Geelong: Deakin University.

Morgan, H. 1997. *Cognitive styles and classroom learning.* Westport: Praeger.

Morgan, RR, Ponticall, JA & Gordon, EE. 1998. *Enhancing learning in training and adult education.* Westport: Praeger.

Mrosla, H. 1989. Field-dependent and field-independent learning-teaching styles. *Progressio* 11(1):98-105.

Myers, E, Miels, J, Ford, K & Burke, R. 1997. Incorporating technology use into preservice teacher preparation. *Reading Improvement* 32(3):98-105.

Olivier, I, Martins, N, Cronjé, GJ, Van Schoor, WA & Van Helden, MJ. 1998. *Introduction to the economic and management environment: study guide for INM102-4.* Pretoria: University of South Africa.

O'Neill, HF & Spielberger, CD. (eds). 1979. *Cognitive and affective learning strategies.* New York: Academic Press.

Orr, M. 1997. Conference report: evolution or mutation? *Scrutiny 2 issues in English studies in Southern Africa* 2(1):51-54.

Orr, MH & Schutte, CJH. 1992. *The language of science.* Durban: Butterworths.

Orr, MH & Spencer, B. 1998. *Department of English. Practical English Tutorial letter 101 for PEN100-3 of 1998.* Pretoria: University of South Africa.

Packwood, A. 1994. The reading debate: the write weigh to do it, in *Skills for life? The meaning and value of literacy* edited by Barker, K & Lonsdale, R. London: Taylor Graham Publishing.

Pearson, PD. 1984. *Handbook of reading research.* New York: Longman.

Pearson, PD & Fielding, L. 1991. Comprehension instruction, in *Handbook of reading research, Volume II,* edited by Barr, R, Kamil, ML, Mosenthal, P & Pearson, PD. New York: Longman: 815-860.

Phelps, R. 1991. Review, critique and future directions: research on course design and communication in distance education, in *Report on the second American symposium on research in distance education, May 22-24, 1991.* American center for the study of distance education, Pennsylvania State University, Pennsylvania.

*Policy framework for education and training of the ANC.* 1994. Braamfontein: ANC.

Pressley, M, Schuder, T, Bergman, JL & El-Dinary, PB. 1992. A researcher-educator collaborative interview study of transactional comprehension strategies instruction. *Journal of Educational Psychology* 84(2):231-246.

Pschebilski, PG. 1985. Motivation for learning in adults of various age groups as a means of stimulating their professional, social and cultural activity, in *Motivation for adult education*, edited by Knoll, JH. Bonn: German Commission for UNESCO:195-208.

Ramsden, P. 1983. Institutional variations in British students' approaches to learning and experiences of teaching. *Higher Education* 12:691-705.

Raubenheimer, JR. 1983. Die ontwerp van tersiêre leesontwikkelingstrategieë. PhD-proefskrif. Universiteit van Stellenbosch, Stellenbosch.

Rayner, S & Riding, R. 1997. Towards a categorisation of cognitive styles and learning styles. *Educational Psychology* 17(1&2):5-27.

Reed, D & Sork, TJ. 1990. Ethical considerations in distance education. *The American Journal of Distance Education* 4(2):30-43.

*Report on the second American symposium on research in distance education, May 22-24 1991*. American center for the study of distance education, Pennsylvania State University, Pennsylvania.

Reynolds, J & Werner, SC. 1994. An alternative paradigm for college reading and study skills courses. *Journal of Reading* 37(4):272-278.

Rickelman, RJ & Henk, WA. 1990. Telecommunications in the reading classroom. *The Reading Teacher* 43(6):418-419.

Rivera, C (ed). 1984. *Language proficiency and academic achievement*. Avon: Multilingual Matters.

Rowe, A. 1999. *Spanish for lower intermediate level: study guide for SPS102-C*. University of South Africa: Pretoria.

Rowntree, D. 1990. *Teaching through self-instruction*. London: Kogan Page.

Rowntree, D. 1992. *Exploring open and distance learning*. London: Kogan Page.

Rowntree, D. 1995. *Preparing materials for open, distance and flexible learning*. London: Kogan Page.

Rowntree, D. 1997. *Making materials-based learning work*. London: Kogan Page.

Ruddell, B & Speaker, RB. 1985. The interactive reading process: a model, in *Theoretical models and processes of reading,* third edition, edited by Singer, H & Ruddell, RB. Newark: International Reading Association:751-793.

Rumelhart, DE. 1985. Toward an interactive model of reading, in *Theoretical models and processes of reading*, third edition, edited by Singer, H & Ruddell, RB. Newark: International Reading Association:722-750.

Saarnio, DA, Oka, ER & Paris, SG. 1990. Developmental predictors of children's reading comprehension, in *Reading and its development* edited by Carr, TH & Levy, BA. San Diego: Academic Press, Inc:57-80.

Samuelowicz, K. 1987. Learning problems of overseas students: two sides of a story. *Higher Education Research and Development* 6(2):121-133.

Samuels, SJ. 1985. Toward a theory of automatic information processing in reading: updated, in *Theoretical models and processes of reading*, third edition, edited by Singer, H & Ruddell, RB. Newark: International Reading Association:719-721.

Samuels, SJ & Kamil, ML. 1984. Models of the reading process, in *Handbook of reading research,* edited by Pearson, PD. New York: Longman:185-224.

*South African Qualifications Authority (SAQA) Bulletin* May/June 1997. 1:1. (http://www.saqa.org.za/docs/bulletin/bulletin97-1.html).

Shannon, P. 1989. Paradigmatic diversity within the reading research community. *Journal of Reading Behavior* XXI(2):97-107.

Schraw, G & Dennison, RS. 1994. The effect of reader purpose on interest and recall. *Journal of Reading Behavior* 26(1):1-16.

Schulze, S. 1992. Faktore wat studiebenadering beïnvloed. *Progressio* 14(1):21-27.

Siebert, H. 1985. Research in motivation for further education in the Federal Republic of Germany, in *Motivation for adult education* edited by Knoll, JH. Bonn: German Commission for UNESCO:35-50.

Simon, A. 1991. Reasons provided by black pupils in the rural Mahlabathini area in Natal province, South Africa, for poor academic performance in Black secondary schools. *Journal of Negro Education* 60(4):581-592.

Simpson, ML. 1995. Talk throughs: a strategy for encouraging active learning across the content areas. *Journal of Reading* 38(4):296-304.

Sims, RR. 1990. Adapting training to trainee learning styles. *Journal of European Industrial Training* 14(2):17-22.

Singer, H. 1985. The substrata-factor theory of reading, in *Theoretical models and processes of reading*, third edition, edited by Singer, H & Ruddell, RB. Newark: International Reading Association: 630-660.

Singer, H & Donlan, D. 1989. *Reading and learning from text.* Hillsdale, New Jersey: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates.

Singer, H & Ruddell, RB. (eds). 1985. *Theoretical models and processes of reading,* third edition. Newark: International Reading Association.

Singh, BR. 1988. Cognitive styles, cultural pluralism and effective teaching and learning. *International Review of Education* 34(3):355-369.

Slabbert, JA. 1988. Die ontwikkeling van 'n metaleermodel. DEd-proefskrif. Universiteit van Pretoria, Pretoria.

Smit, L. 1999. Students on-line SOL News. *Unisa News* 1:18.

Smith, CB. (ed). 1989. The illusion of knowing: comprehension-monitoring failure among college students. *Reading Psychology* 10(4):381-386.

Smith, CB & Elliot, PG. 1986. *Reading activities for middle and secondary schools,* second edition. New York: Teachers' College, Columbia University.

Spady, WG. 1994. *Outcomes-Based Education Critical Issues and aAnswers.* American Association of School Administrators.

Spangenberg-Urbschaft, K & Pritchard, R. (eds). 1994. *Kids come in all languages: reading instruction for ESL students.* Newark: International Reading Association.

Spires, H. 1990. Metacognition and reading: implication for instruction. *Reading* 24(3):152-156.

Spring, HT. 1985. Teacher decisionmaking: a metacognitive approach. *The Reading Teacher* 39(3):290-295.

Stanovich, KE. 1980. Toward an interactive-compensatory model of individual differences in the development of reading fluency. *Reading Research Quarterly* 16: 32-71.

Starfield, S. 1992. Language and academic achievement: academic support at the University of the Witwatersrand. *SAVTO/SAALT Journal for Language Teaching* 26(1):1-6.

Stewart, O & Tei, E. 1983. Some implications of metacognition for reading instruction. *Journal of Reading* 27(1):36-43.

Steyn, P. 1993. The adult learner. Paper presented at a seminar on distance education. University of South Africa: Pretoria.

Stilwell, WE & Crovo, RJ. 1998. Internet training programs: a college education response. *Reading Improvement* 34(3):106-113.

Stoller, F & Grabe, W. 1993. Implications for L2 vocabulary acquisition and instruction from L1 vocabulary research, in *Second language reading and vocabulary learning* edited by Huckin, T, Haynes, M & Coady, J. Norwood: Ablex Publishing Corporation.

Swanepoel, PH. 1987. Special language communication. *Distance education conference papers 6, 18-21 May 1987*, University of South Africa, Pretoria.

Thorpe, M. 1994. The expansion of distance education - a cautionary tale. Paper presented at the Canadian association for distance education, Vancouver.

Trigwell, K & Prosser, M. 1991. Improving the quality of student learning: the influence of learning context and student approaches to learning and learning outcomes. *Higher Education* 22:251-266.

Tuckman, BW. 1991. Motivating college students: a model based on empirical evidence. *Innovative Higher Education* 15(2):167-176.

Turner, ND. 1993. Learning styles and metacognition. *Reading Improvement* 30 (2):82-85.

University of South Africa: Department of English. 1997a. *Comprehension Skills for Science: CSS101-H.* Pretoria.

University of South Africa: Department of Further Teacher Education. 1997b. *Learners with special educational needs* 2: *study guide for the further diploma in education: Learners with learning and behavioural problems FDESE4-A.* Pretoria.

University of South Africa: Faculty of Education. 1997c. *General tutorial letter: 301/1997 for EDUFAC-N.* Pretoria.

University of South Africa: Department of English. 1998. *Practical English: tutorial letter: 101/1998 for PEN100-3.* Pretoria.

University of South Africa: Department of Educational Studies. 1999. *General Education 2: Teaching and learning: tutorial letter 102/1999 for GED202-X.* Pretoria.

Valcke, MMA, Martens, RL, Poelmans, PHAG & Daal, MM. 1993. The actual use of embedded support devices in self-study materials by students in a distance education setting. *Distance Education* 14(1):55-84.

Van Aswegen, A, Blackbeard, M, Kruger, JM & Erasmus, J. 1997. *Study Manual PRL101-3 (Law of Persons).* Pretoria: University of South Africa.

Van Dijk, T & Kintsch, W. 1985. Cognitive psychology and discourse: recalling and summarizing stories, in *Theoretical models and processes of reading,* third edition, edited by Singer, H & Ruddell, RB. Newark: International Reading Association: 794-812.

Van Rossum, EJ & Schenk, SM. 1984. The relationship between learning conception, study strategy and learning outcome. *British Journal of Educational Psychology* 54:73-83.

Van Schoor, WA & Van Helden, MJ. 1997. *Introduction to the economic and management environment: study guide 1 for INM101-3 (Economic and Management Sciences).* Pretoria: University of South Africa.

Venezky, RL. 1984. The history of reading research, in *Handbook of reading research,* edited by Pearson, PD. New York: Longman: 3-38.

Vorster, PJ. 1992. The distance student. *Lyra Academica* 7(3):13-21.

Wade, SE & Reynolds, RE. 1989. Developing metacognitive awareness. *Journal of Reading* 33(1):6-15.

Watkins, D. 1983. Depth of processing and the quality of learning outcomes. *Instructional Science* 12:49-56.

Watkins, D, Biggs, J & Regmi, M. 1991. Does confidence in the language of instruction influence a student's approach to learning? *Instructional Science* 20(4):331-339.

Watkins, D & Hattie, J. 1981. The learning processes of Australian university students: investigations of contextual and personological factors. *British Journal of Educational Psychology* 51:384-393.

Watkins, D & Regmi, M. 1990. Language of instruction and approach to learning: a Nepalese investigation. *Perceptual and Motor Skills* 71:175-178.

Watkins, D & Regmi, M. 1992. How universal are student conceptions of learning? A Nepalese investigation. *Psychologia - An International Journal of Psychology in the Orient* 35(2):101-110.

Wells, R. 1991. Review of recent research on learners and learner support in distance education delivered by computer-mediated communications, in *Report on the second American symposium on research in distance education, May 22-24 1991*. American center for the study of distance education, Pennsylvania State University, Pennsylvania.

White, RT. 1992. Implications of recent research on learning for curriculum and assessment. *Journal of Curriculum Studies* 24(2):153-164.

Willis, JW, Stephens, EC & Matthew, KI. 1996. *Technology, reading, and language arts.* Boston: Allyn and Bacon.

Wong, S. 1992. Approaches to study of distance education students. *Research in Distance Education* 4(3):11-16.

Work, MG & McLaughlin, TF. 1990. The effects of a skill based individualized reading program on reading achievement of adolescents and adults with low reading ability. *Reading Improvement* 27(1):58-63.

Woudstra, A & Murgatroyd, S. 1992. Responding to change: designing a flexible learning organization for distance education, in *Distance education symposium: selected papers*, *Part 1*, edited by Beaudoin, MF, Dillon, C, Blanchard, D, Gibson, CC, Woudstra, A, Murgatroyd, S & Wright, SJ. Papers presented at the second American symposium on research in distance education, Pennsylvania State University, Pennsylvania.

Yopp, RH & Dreher, M. 1994. Effects of active comprehension instruction on attitudes and motivation in reading. *Reading Horizons* 34(4):288-302.

Zolezzi, SA. 1992. Alternative selection measures for university undergraduate admissions. Research report submitted to the Faculty of Education, University of the Witwatersrand. In partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Education. University of the Witwatersrand: Johannesburg.

# ADDENDUM A

Source:

Harris, K. 1998. *Activity book: tutorial letter 103/98 (History1).* Pretoria: University of South Africa.

UNIT

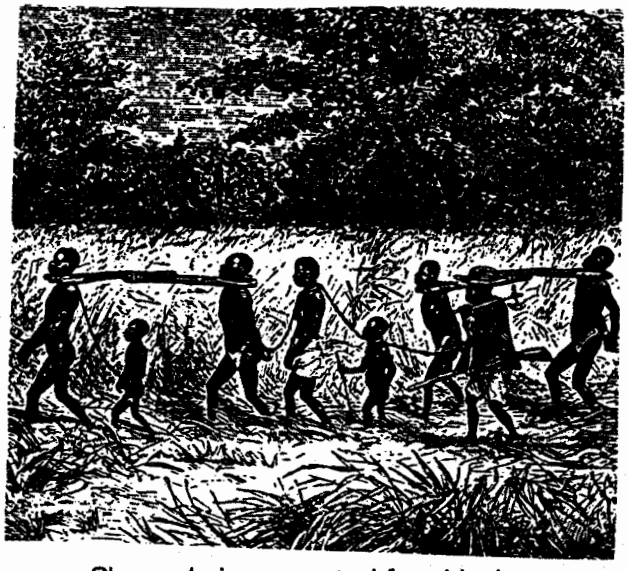
# 11

# Slavery at the Cape

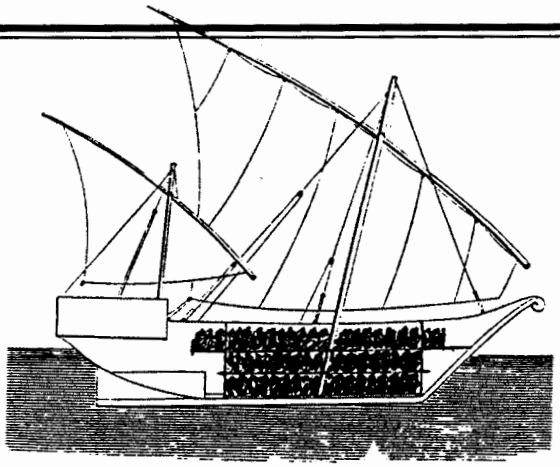
When you have worked through this unit you should have a better understanding of the particular form that slavery took at the Cape during the VOC period, as well as the implications for the slaves themselves and for the economy of the region. The institution of slavery also had a profound effect on social relations at the Cape, which is only touched on here, but explored in more detail in unit 15.

## Activity 11.1

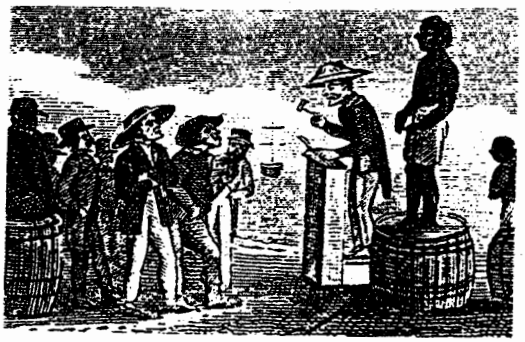
Read pages 266 to 272 of your study guide, study the pictures below and then complete the questions that follow:



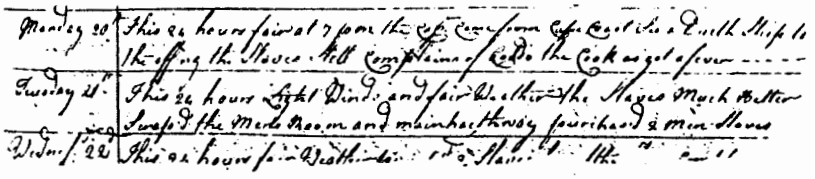
Slaves being escorted for shipping



This section of a slave ship illustrates how closely slaves were packed in the holds.



Slaves being sold at public auction



Log entries from two British slavers reveal constant worries about diseases on board. A major killer was dysentry.

a) Using the pictures above, imagine that you are a slave who has recently arrived at a farm in the Cape. Write a paragraph describing how you came to be in this position.

b) Define the term "slave" as applied to slavery at the Cape in two or three sentences - in other words, explain what it meant to be a slave.

## *Activity 11.2*

Read pages 273 to 277 of your study guide and study the table reproduced below to decide whether the following statements are true or false. As you make your decisions consider carefully **why** you have arrived at a particular answer. Although you are not asked to do so here, remember that you should always be able to give evidence or examples to support your answers.

Numbers of slave-owners grouped according to number of slaves owned in 1750

| Slaves | Cape District | Stellenbosch | Drakenstein | Swellendam | Total owners |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1–5 | 171 | 39 | 109 | 66 | 385 |
| 6–10 | 74 | 22 | 43 | 8 | 147 |
| 11–25 | 71 | 16 | 29 | 1 | 117 |
| 26–50 | 19 | 5 | 0 | 1 | 25 |
| Over 50 | 6 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 7 |
| Total owners | 341 | 83 | 181 | 76 | 681 |

*(Source: R Elphick & H Giliomee (eds), The Shaping of South African Society, 1652-1840, Cape Town, 1989, p 136)*

a) Slave labour was used throughout the Cape in many different sections of the economy. **True/False**

b) Most private slave-owners in the 18th century owned 15 or more slaves. **True/False**

c) Slave labour had a positive effect on economic development at the Cape. **True/False**

d) Within Cape Town, most slaves belonged to the VOC who used them for both skilled and unskilled work. **True/False**

e) Slave labour was used more extensively on the agricultural farms of the settled region than on the pastoral farms of the interior. **True/False**

f) Owning slaves was like having money in the bank. **True/False**

g) The extensive use of slaves resulted in efficient farming at the Cape. **True/False**

h) Dependence on slave labour at the Cape encouraged the expansion of the colony. **True/False**

## *Activity 11.3*

This section is based on pages 277 to 286 of your study guide. Read the extract below and answer the questions that follow:

> Cape slavery has sometimes been described both by contemporaries and later historians as 'mild' in nature. These assessments are, however, often based on erroneous assumptions. One was that domestic slaves in Cape Town were typical of the whole colony. Clearly this was not the case, and as several writers of the time noted, 'the treatment of the different classes of slaves at the Cape is by no means the same . . . the people of Cape Town universally treat them well in comparison to the farmers and planters of the country parts'. Another assumption was that slave manumission and intermarriage with freemen were relatively frequent: in fact recent research has shown that the opposite was the case.
>
> Writers have also stressed the paternalistic relationship between master and slaves which could develop in a society like the Cape where slaves were held in small groups unlike the plantations of other slave societies. Also often cited is the protection that the VOC and British administration offered to slaves against abuse by their owners. These arguments require closer examination.

*(Source: R Elphick & H Giliomee (eds), The Shaping of South African Society, 1652-1840, Cape Town, 1989, p 150)*

According to the above passage, the view that slavery as practised at the Cape was quite humane was based on certain "**erroneous assumptions**" (mistaken or false beliefs).

a) Identify the four arguments named in the passage, which are referred to as "erroneous assumptions".

b) On page 277 of your study guide, another argument supporting the view that Cape slavery was "mild" is also mentioned. Can you identify it?

c) Based on the passage above, and your study guide, pages 277 and 278, and 290, try to disprove **each** of the assumptions identified in questions 1) and 2) by providing a counterargument in one or two sentences:

| **Argument for** "Cape slavery was relatively mild" | **Counter-argument** |
|---|---|
| 1) | |
| 2) | |
| 3) | |
| 4) | |
| 5) | |

## *Activity 11.4*

There is much evidence that slaves at the Cape, as in other slaveholding societies, were greatly disadvantaged and discriminated against. Let us look at the subject of punishment. At the Cape it was not legal for a private owner to use physical violence to discipline his slaves. The law stated:

> The owner is allowed, in the case of a slave making a mistake, to correct such a slave with domestic punishment *[domestijke straffe]*, it is not permitted to set a slave in irons, or worse to torture or otherwise maltreat the slave.[7]

*(Source: R Shell, "The family and slavery at the Cape, 1960-1808", W James & M Simons (eds), The Angry Divide: Social and Economic History of the Western Cape, Cape Town, 1989, p 21.)*

1) Read pages 279 and 280 of the study guide again and study page 19 of Tutorial Letter 102. Now write a **paragraph** in which you discuss to what extent this law was observed or obeyed.

2) The Company itself could and did legally carry out terrible punishment. Read what Robert Ross has to say on this subject in the extract below taken from his book: Beyond the Pale: Essays on the History of Colonial South Africa (Johannesburg 1994), pages 163 and 164:



These laws were backed up by a code of punishment which, to a twentieth-century historian, was barbaric in the extreme. To a certain extent it derived from the nature of slavery as an institution. Fines were simply not practical, as legally slaves could not possess property. Similarly, imprisonment hit the master financially without greatly altering the position of the slave, who could not suffer too much from being deprived of a liberty he or she did not possess. Only the company gained from the availability of extra manpower, but even this was not very useful since the lime works of Robben Island, to which the slaves were condemned, were of little importance for the economy of the colony. Effective punishment for a slave could, therefore, only be corporal or, of course, capital.[27]

The lowest level of punishment was flogging, often coupled with putting the unfortunate slave in chains and then sending him back to his master to work chained for a number of years. For somewhat more serious offenses, slaves were also branded, and might be put on Robben Island, often also in chains. However, the system of legal terror by which the authorities tried to maintain order over the subject population rested primarily on capital punishment. All offenses against the person of a slave's master, all murders, whether against free or slave, and many thefts were punished with death. It might be thought that this did not allow any gradation in treatment, but this was not so. Dutch law allowed criminals to be executed in numerous different ways. Depending on the severity of the offense, the condemned man or woman died more or less slowly and painfully, and at the Cape these distinctions were ordered in an unwritten but regular pattern. Certain methods of death were reserved for those found guilty of particular crimes. Thus arsonists were burned -- AND MANY OTHER GRUESOME EXAMPLES ! ----

all such punishments were carried out in public, generally at a regular spot, although those said to have looted wrecked ships were hanged summarily on the beach. Moreover, so that everyone would have a constant reminder of the consequences, the corpse of the executed would be left, as the formula had it, "until the birds and the wind destroy it." Thus the execution ground, on the edge of Cape Town, approximately where the central railway station now stands, was adorned with rotting bodies.

In the light of the passage on the previous page and page 280 of the study guide, answer the following questions:

1) Why was corporal punishment the most common form of punishment?

2) What was the statutory punishment for any act of violence by a slave against his master?

3) Whom did the VOC use to administer punishments?

4) What were the two main purposes of harsh punishment of slaves?

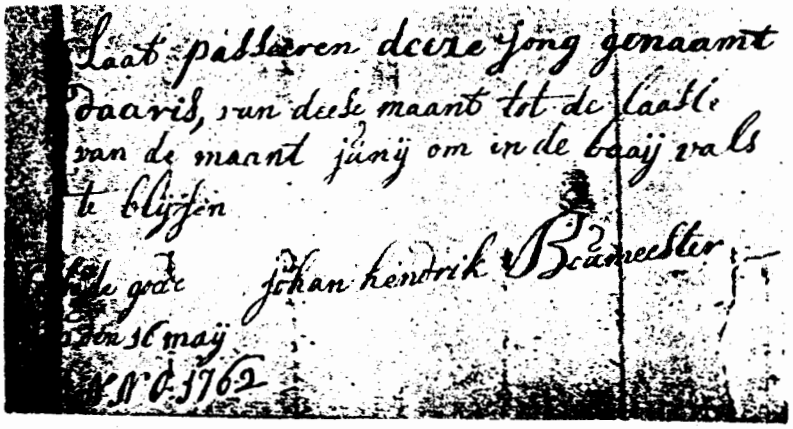
## Historical Context

**It is important to remember the historical context of this violent punishment - in other words we must try to understand events within their own time. Chaining, whipping and judicial torture were also applied to Europeans. For example in 1705, a Dutch overseer found guilty of desertion was sentenced to be 'beaten by the Caffers, to be locked in chains, and to work for six months without pay' (Shell, 'The Family and Slavery', p 20). It remains true that in practice there was a vast difference between punishments given to slaves and to free persons.**

## Activity 11.6

Read quickly through pages 277 to 287 of your study guide again. **Apart** from their subjection to punishment, slaves were disadvantaged and discriminated against in many ways within Cape society. **Make a list of these disadvantages**.

For example, this pass issued to a slave in 1762 tells you something about their freedom of movement:




**Translation:** **Permit the passholder, slave Daaris, to stay in False Bay from this month to the end of June.**

*(Source: V de Kock, Those in Bondage, London, 1950, p 80)*

# ADDENDUM B

Source:

Dowling, F. 1997. *English communication for literature: study guide 3 for PEN 100-3.* Pretoria: University of South Africa.

# lesson 1

# So Long a Letter:

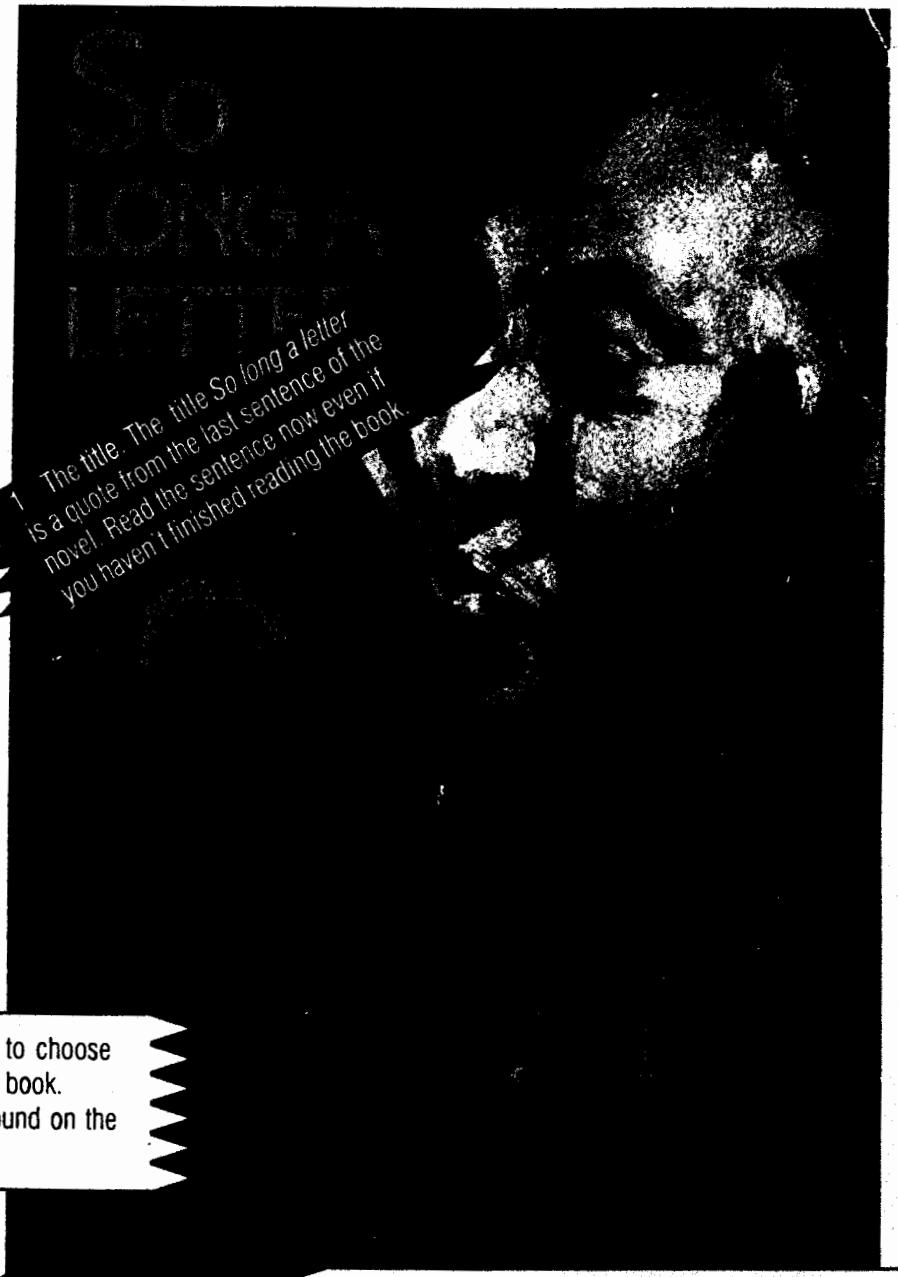
Introduction to the novel

By the end of this lesson, you should be able to

- approach a novel with confidence
- draw up a bibliography
- point out important features in Chapter 1 of *So Long a Letter*

This lesson will take you step-by-step through the process of opening a novel and beginning to read it. Together we will go through the first chapter of Mariama Bâ's novel, *So Long a Letter*.

When you buy or borrow a book, what is the first thing you see? There is a lot you can learn from what we call the opening pages of a book. The first thing you see is called the cover:




1 The title. The title *So long a letter* is a quote from the last sentence of the novel. Read the sentence now even if you haven't finished reading the book.

3 A cover illustration. Publishers try to choose illustrations that are appropriate to the book. Details about the illustration may be found on the back cover.

2 The author. Details about the author - if he or she is unknown to you - may be found on the cover.

4 The publisher. This book is published by Virago, a publishing house that specializes in publishing books by women.

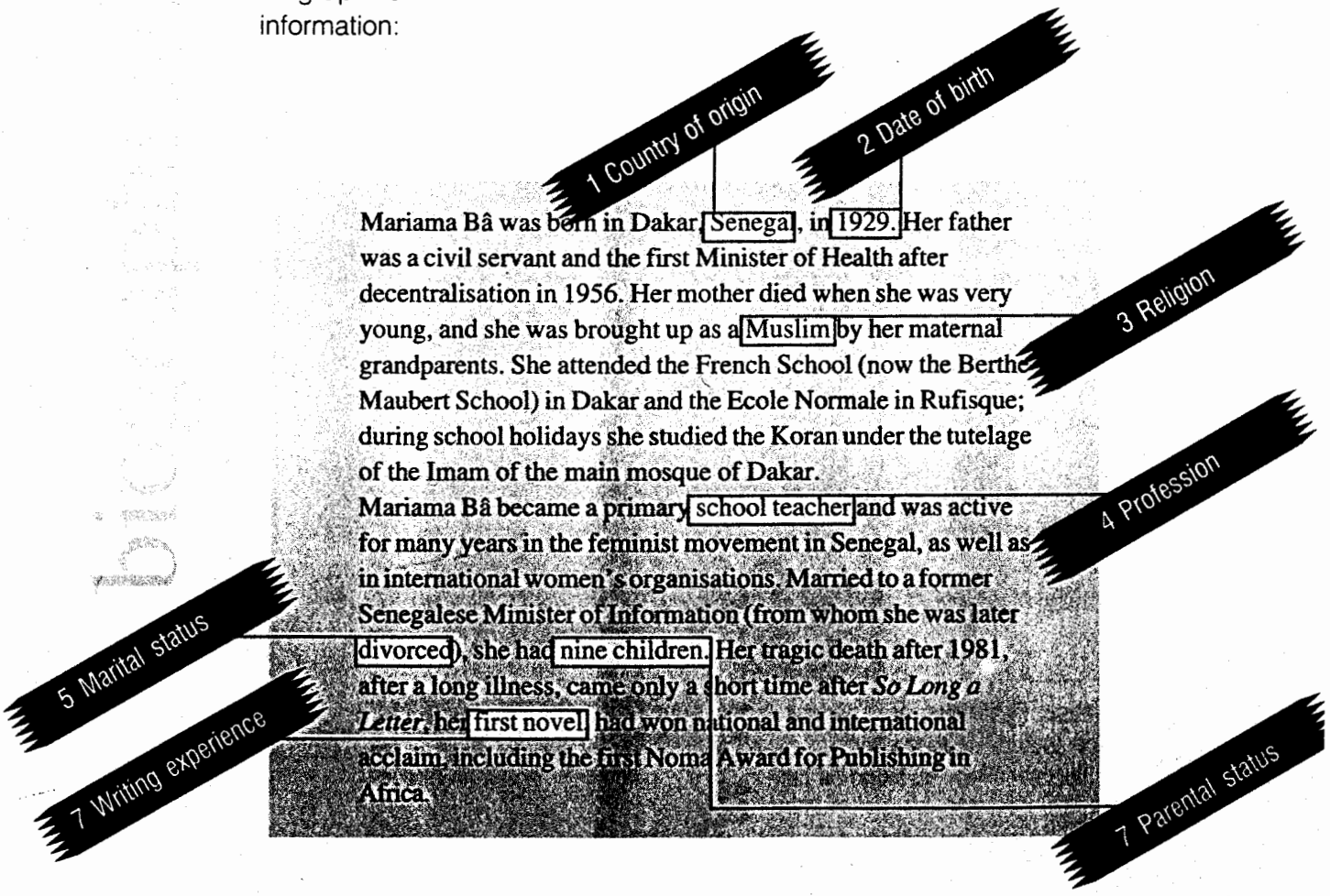
Once you've opened the cover of a novel, the next thing you read is usually something we call biographical information. This is information about the author of the novel, who is also referred to as the novelist. Students of literature are seldom questioned about a novelist's biography. However, many important facts that should not be ignored emerge from this biographical information:

Mariama Bâ talks about her novel

**248**

"I believe that what made my book so successful was that it put sentiment, emotion, back into its place. I believe that we are not only animals, an animal without emotion .... It is emotion, sentiment which directs our lives ..."

(Interview conducted by Barbara Harrell-Bond for *The African Book Publishing Record*, 1980, Volume VI, numbers 3&4, pp.209 -214)




All these facts will help us to place the novel in a context. Novels are not written in a vacuum. They are created by individuals who have a life history, who have culture, values and even politics that affect the way they see the world and write about it.

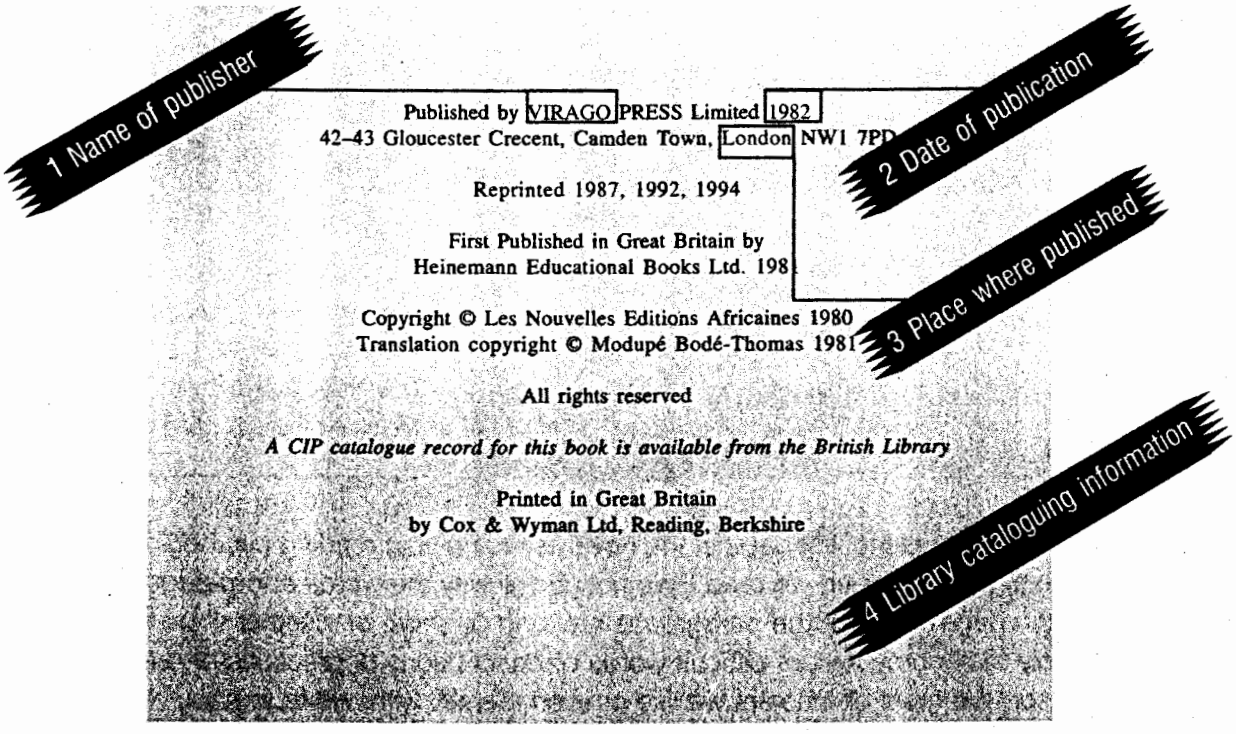
Immediately following the biographical information, there is often a brief summary or synopsis of the novel. You will notice that this summary is reprinted on the back cover.

Read the summary of *So Long a Letter.* It begins with the words, '*So Long a Letter* is a cry from the heart ...'. Imagine that you are sitting in my tutorial class and I ask you this question: Why do you think the publisher prints this summary both here on the first page and on the back cover of the book? If possible, give your reply aloud.

**Tutor's Response**

Publishers want people to buy books. But before you buy a book, you want to know what it is about. That's why the publisher helps you by providing this brief outline. It is not a detailed plot summary, which you will attempt in the next lesson. Did you notice how the publisher described the novel as a 'brilliant portrait'? As you know, adjectives like 'brilliant', 'excellent' or 'wonderful' appeal to our emotions, encouraging us to feel positive or enthusiastic. But you will have to decide for yourself what you think of the novel.

Turn the page. What you are looking at now is called the title page, and it contains the same information as the book's cover. However, in this case, we also learn on the title page that the novel was originally written in French and then translated. Turn the page again. You are now looking at the imprint page. This page contains important information for your bibliography as well as for libraries which need to catalogue the book.




In your notebook or file, write a bibliographical entry for Mariama Bâ's novel.

**Tutor's Response**

Your entry should contain the following information:
Bâ, Mariama. *So Long a Letter*. London: Virago Press, 1982.

Did you notice the way my bibliographical entry is punctuated? This is what you need to try and do in your bibliography. Remember that a bibliography is obviously not required in the examination.

## Compiling a Bibliography

250

~~Academic essays should have a bibliography. A bibliography is a list of all works consulted~~ in th preparation of your essay. It is particularly important to make sure that any work you have quoted appears in your bibliography. There are different ways of compiling a bibliography, but here are the basic rules for all of them:

1 At the end of your essay, preferably on a new page, you make a heading, ***Bibliography.***
2 Underneath the heading, you list books and articles you have used.
3 This list must be arranged alphabetically according to author.
4 The author's surname comes first, followed by names or initials.
5 The title of the work must be underlined or in *italics*.
6 Give the place, e.g. London, where the book was published.
7 Give the name of the publisher, e.g. Virago Press.
8 Give the date of publication, e.g. 1982.

Consult *The New Word Power*, pages 244-248 for more advice on bibliographies.

Now read the facing page. This is called the dedication. Authors often dedicate their works to friends or relatives who inspired or helped them:

***To Abibatou Niang, pure and constant, lucid and thorough, who shares my feelings.***

***To Annette d'Erneville of the warm heart and level head.***

***To all women and men of good will.***

Is it significant that the author dedicates her novel *To all women and to men of good will*? If possible, answer this question aloud.

**Tutor's Response**

The author seems to feel a strong connection to all women, but not to all men, only those of good will.

At last you've arrived at the first page of the novel itself and your reading can begin. Many different things happen when we read. We notice the way the words and paragraphs are printed on the page, whether the paragraphs are long or short, or whether there is any dialogue. We may come across difficult words or descriptions of practices or customs we do not recognise. We meet characters we like or even identify with, we read about relationships that may be like or unlike our own. Sometimes the writer seems to be telling a story, moving us from event to event. At other times, the writer seems to stop us and make us look more closely at something or feel an emotion. What should you notice as you read?

Read the first page of Mariama Bâ's novel, *So Long a Letter*. Use a pencil to mark words you don't understand. Underline any features of the first page that interest or puzzle you.

**Tutor's Response**

How many of the following features did you notice on page 1? Some of the items I've marked you probably thought were too obvious to be noticed:

1 Chapter number. Novels are usually built up in chapters. Apart from making life easier for readers, chapter numbers provide students of literature with useful reference points. For example, you could say, 'In Chapter 1, Ramatoulaye reminisces to Aissatou about their childhood'.

2 The novel begins with a salutation that we normally find in a letter. As its title suggests, this novel will be in the form of a letter.

3 This novel will be narrated or told by a first-person narrator. In other words, *So Long a Letter* will be narrated from the point of view of a woman who refers to herself as 'I'.

4 This letter is a response to one written by Aissatou.

5 This will not be a typical letter. Instead, it will be something like a diary.

6 There are many similarities between these two letter-writing friends. In their youth, they were as close as sisters.

7 The cultural details here tell us more about the lives of these correspondents. They were brought up in the tradition of Islam. Like children from many other cultures, they followed a little ritual when they lost their milk teeth.

8 Memories are described as 'the salt of remembrance'. This is an example of an image. Specifically, it is a metaphor.

9 Feelings and images from the past are experienced as 'ebb and tide', suggesting the coming and going of the sea at low and high tide.

10. An idea or possible theme emerges. This a question for us to think about. How does the 'past beget the present'?

11 This is an example of a footnote, a note at the bottom of the page which gives extra information about something on that page. Footnotes are common in academic writing. They are not common in fiction. As this footnote tells you, the remaining numbers you find in the text will refer to endnotes, that is, notes printed at the end of a chapter or (as in this case) the end of the book. The notes will help you understand Senegalese words and customs.

12 This paragraph stands out because it is so short and simple.

# 1

Dear Aissatou

I have received your letter. By way of reply, I am beginning this diary, my prop in my distress. Our long association has taught me that confiding in others allays pain.

Your presence in my life is by no means fortuitous. Our grandmothers in their compounds were separated by a fence and would exchange messages daily. Our mothers used to argue over who would look after our uncles and aunts. As for us, we wore out wrappers and sandals on the same stony road to the koranic school; we buried our milk teeth in the same holes and begged our fairy godmothers to restore them to us, more splendid than before.

If over the years, and passing through the realities of life, dreams die, I still keep intact my memories, the salt of remembrance.

I conjure you up. The past is reborn, along with its procession of emotions. I close my eyes. Ebb and tide of feeling: heat and dazzlement, the woodfires, the sharp green mango, bitten into in turns, a delicacy in our greedy mouths. I close my eyes. Ebb and tide of images: drops of sweat beading your mother's ochre-coloured face as she emerges from the kitchen, the procession of young wet girls chattering on their way back from springs.

We walked the same path from adolescence to maturity, where the past begets the present.

My friend, my friend, my friend. I call on you three times.*

Yesterday you were divorced. Today I am a widow

* Notes are to be found on p.90.

GLOSSARY BOX

| | |
|---|---|
| prop | support |
| confiding | telling secrets |
| allays | relieves |
| fortuitous | by chance |
| compounds | enclosures |
| koranic school | school where the Koran is taught |

**Study Hint** 252

When reading a novel, characters' names and relationships can become confusing. As you read, try to keep a family tree, that is, a diagram showing the connections between characters.

Reading in the manner just illustrated will help you to notice many potentially interesting or important things. By marking your text with a pencil, you will —

- ▲ find words that need to be looked up in a dictionary
- ▲ find problems that may need to be solved by extra reading or consulting your tutor
- ▲ find plot details
- ▲ trace themes
- ▲ identify imagery.

This process is called close reading, and it concentrates on how a text is constructed. It is certainly not the only way of approaching a text. As you work your way through this module, you will find other ways of looking at and discussing literature.

Now read the rest of Chapter 1, marking it with your pencil as before. You should have a slightly better idea of what to underline.

**Tutor's Response**

Modou is dead. How am I to tell you? One does not fix appointments with fate. Fate grasps whom it wants, when it wants, when it wants. As it moves in the direction of your desires, it brings you plenitude. But more often than not, it unsettles, crosses you. Then one has to endure. I endured the telephone call which disrupted my life.

A taxi quickly hailed! Fast! Fast! Faster still! My throat is dry. There is a rigid lump in my chest. Fast: faster still. At last, the hospital: the mixed smell of suppurations and ether. The hospital – distorted faces, a train of tearful people, known and unknown, witnesses to this awful tragedy. A long corridor, which seems to stretch out endlessly. At the end, a room. In the room, a bed. On the bed, Modou stretched out,

1 The writer says she is a widow, so Modou must be her husband.

2 A statement like this is an interesting point for discussion. It shows something about the person who says it.

3 Although she is writing a letter, the narrator here helps us to relive the experience of her husband's death.

GLOSSARY BOX

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| plenitude | abundance, many good things | suppurations | pus, discharge |
| ether | kind of anaesthetic | tenuous | delicate, not strong |
| grandiose | intending to sound important | | |
| rigorous | thorough, exact | | |

cut off from the world of the living by a white sheet in which he is completely enveloped. A trembling hand moves forward and slowly uncovers the body. His hairy chest, at rest forever, is visible through his crumpled blue shirt with thin stripes. This face, set in pain and surprise, is indeed his, the bald forehead, the half-open mouth are indeed his. I want to grasp his hand. But someone pulls me away. I can hear Mawdo, his doctor friend, explaining to me: a heart attack came on suddenly in his office while dictating a letter. The secretary had the presence of mind to call me. Mawdo recounts how he arrived too late with the ambulance. I think: the doctor after death. He mimes the massaging of the heart that was undertaken, as well as the futile effort at mouth-to-mouth resuscitation. Again, I think: heart massage, mouth-to-mouth resuscitation, ridiculous weapons against the divine will.

I listen to the words that create around me a new atmosphere in which I move, a stranger and tormented. Death, the tenuous passage between two opposite worlds, one tumultuous, the other still.

Where to lie down? Middle age demands dignity. I hold tightly onto my prayer beads. I tell the beads ardently, remaining standing on legs of jelly. My loins beat as to the rhythm of childbirth.

Cross-sections of my life spring involuntarily from my memory, grandiose verses from the Koran, noble words of consolation fight for my attention.

Joyous miracle of birth, dark miracle of death. Between the two, a life, a destiny, says Mawdo Bâ.

I look intently at Mawdo. He seems to be taller than usual in his white overall. He seems to me thin. His reddened eyes express forty years of friendship. I admire his noble hands, hands of an absolute delicacy, supple hands used to tracking down illness. Those hands, moved by friendship and a rigorous science, could not save his friend.

4 The details in this passage tell us that the letter-writer does not come from a very poor or rural community.

5 Ramatoulaye, the writer of this letter, is now middle-aged.

6 Religion is important to Ramatoulaye.

7 The doctor Mawdo is an old family friend.

---

In your study group, if you have one, discuss the first chapter of *So Long a Letter*.
Talk about —

- ▲ the value of very long friendships
- ▲ the idea that 'confiding in others allays pain'
- ▲ whether women form closer friendships than men
- ▲ the image describing memories as 'the salt of remembrance'
- ▲ how it is that 'the past begets the present'
- ▲ being divorced or widowed after a long marriage
- ▲ fate and destiny — are medical procedures 'ridiculous weapons against the divine will'?
- ▲ how it feels when someone close to you dies in hospital.

**Tutor's Response**

One of the best things about fiction is the way it generates debate. Some of the topics you discussed are what we c
issues or themes in the novel. For example, the following are all themes or issues in *So Long a Letter*:

- ▲ relationships that endure
- ▲ female friendship
- ▲ memory
- ▲ fate
- ▲ the way relationships between husbands and wives come to an end.

---

Think about how the narrator makes us relive her experience of her husband's death. How does she get the words on the page to bring that scene to life? If possible, give your answer aloud.

**Tutor's Response**

This was quite a tricky question because it was about style or technique. If you came up with any of the following suggestions in your answer, you have come close to understanding style:

- ▲ In the paragraph describing her husband's death, the narrator often leaves the verb out of her sentences, for example, 'A taxi quickly hailed!'.
- ▲ The narrator uses punctuation to show how breathless, anxious and distressed she is. The exclamation marks are almost like the pounding of her heart. She uses the colon (:) to create speed, and by leaving words out, her writing seems abrupt and halted, indicating her shock at the sudden event.
- ▲ The narrator describes her sensory responses. That is, we see what she saw ('distorted faces', 'A long corridor'); we experience the same smells ('suppurations and ether'), sensations (a dry throat), impulses ('I want to grasp his hand') and thoughts.

---

### Writing a Diary

Apart from a business or appointments diary, many people keep a personal diary in which they record thoughts, feelings, ordinary and important events in their lives.

To start a diary, all you need is an exercise book. In the top right-hand corner, write the date. Then write down what happened to you today, what you thought about and even unimportant things that happened.

As your novel, *So Long a Letter* shows, fiction can be written in many forms, including that of a letter. Ramatoulaye says that her letter will incorporate a 'diary'. Think about a story — perhaps based on your own life or an experience you have heard about — that could be communicated well in the form of a diary. Start writing your story. (You should try to write at least half a page. Of course, if creative writing interests you, complete the story!)

**Tutor's Response**

In order to create a successful story, the diary entry you have written should not be exactly like an ordinary daily record of your life. There should be some attempt to introduce story elements that will intrigue a reader. What do I mean by 'story elements'? Any of the following elements would interest a reader and encourage him or her to read on:

- ▲ details that create setting
- ▲ details that suggest character
- ▲ an event, incident or problem to be developed
- ▲ a relationship between characters.

In this creative writing exercise, you discovered that there was a difference between an ordinary, daily diary entry and a diary entry that is used to write a

story. The same is also true of Mariama Bâ's 'letter'. Her novel, we have discovered, is written in the form of a letter. But it is a letter that contains story elements.



Think about what makes Chapter 1 of *So Long a Letter* a good introduction to a story. In other words, what makes us want to read on? Write your answer in your notebook.

### Tutor's Response

Many of the story elements you read about earlier are present in Chapter 1. The reader is interested in

- the relationship between the two women who write letters
- the relationship between Ramatoulaye and her husband
- the relationship between Ramatoulaye and Mawdo, the doctor
- the setting in Islamic Africa
- what will happen to Ramatoulaye now that she is widowed
- the character of Ramatoulaye.

If you have not yet finished reading *So Long a Letter*, do so now.

## Summary

In this lesson you've had the unusual experience of going step-by-step through the opening pages of a novel. In the process, you've discovered

- how to write a bibliographical entry
- the importance of a writer's context
- the value of close reading
- how fiction generates debate.

### Further Reading

If you would like to hear Mariama Bâ's opinions, you should read:

Harrell-Bond, Barbara. 1980. Interview: Mariama Bâ. *The African Book Publishing Record*, Volume VI, numbers 3&4, pp.209-214.

# lesson 9

# 'Soul Gone Home'

by Langston Hughes

By the end of this lesson, you will have

- read the play with confidence
- participated in a production of the play

"Black" American English

The English spoken by urban black Americans is a recognised variety of English. This is the English spoken by the two characters in 'Soul Gone Home'.

*Some grammatical features of Black English Vernacular*

No final -s in the third-person singular form of the present tense, e.g. *he walk, she come.*

No use of forms of the verb *be* in the present tense, when it is used as a 'linking' verb within a sentence, e.g. *They real fine, If you interested.*

The use of the verb *be* to mark habitual meaning, but without changing its grammatical form, e.g. *Sometime they be asking me things.*

Use of *been* to express a meaning of past activity with current relevance, e.g. *I been know your name.*

Use of *be done* in the sense of 'will have', e.g. *We be done washed all those things soon.*

Use of double negatives involving the auxiliary verb at the beginning of a sentence, e.g. *Won't nobody do nothing about that.*

(David Crystal, *The English Language*. London: Penguin, 1990. p.238.)

## GLOSSARY BOX

Black English Vernacular words and phrases used in 'Soul Gone Home'

| | |
|---|---|
| Gawd | God |
| Lawd | Lord |
| gonna | going to |
| Is you done | Did you just |
| You done called on me | You asked me |

## GLOSSARY BOX

| | |
|---|---|
| Lemme | Let me |
| ain't done me right | have not done the right things for me |
| ~~borned~~ | gave birth to |
| didies | nappies |
| nigh prostrate | nearly weak to the point of collapse |
| hongry | hungry |
| 'Twarn't | It was not |
| Naw | No |
| nohow | anyway |
| hustlin' | working as a prostitute |
| jawin' | talking |
| 'Taint | it is not |
| could of | could have |
| o' | of |
| ruint me | ruined me (made me pregnant) |
| decent | properly |
| spell | period (of time) |
| gimme | give me |
| yonder | over there |
| flight | flight of stairs |



Just as we did with your novel *So Long a Letter*, we're going to look closely at the opening pages of your set play, 'Soul Gone Home'.

This is the **title of the play**. The expression 'Soul Gone Home' is used to refer to a person who has died. What does this title suggest to you? What does the word 'soul' imply? What are the connotations of the word 'home'?


CHARACTERS

THE MOTHER
THE SON
TWO MEN

This is the **cast** list. At the beginning of every play script a list of characters in the play is provided, sometimes with a description of their appearance. This helps the director to cast the play, that is, to decide how many actors are needed, whether they need to be male or female, young or old. In this cast list, the characters do not have names. They are simply called 'the mother' and 'the son', even though later we realize that the son's name is Ronnie.

*Night. A tenement room, bare, ugly, dirty. An unshaded electric light bulb. In the middle of the room is a cot on which the body of a negro youth (the SON) is lying. His hands are folded across his chest. There are pennies on his eyes. He is a soul gone home. As the curtain rises, his MOTHER, a large middle-aged woman in a red sweater, kneels weeping beside the cot, loudly simulating grief.*

***tenement:***
a building made up of small flats or rooms usually in a semi-slum area

***pennies on his eyes:***
according to an old custom, coins are places on the eyes of dead people

***soul gone home:***
a dead person

***simulating:***
pretending

***Gawd/Lawd:***
God/Lord

The words printed in *italics* are called **stage directions**. These directions are a guide for the director and actors. As readers, we can also learn a lot from the stage directions. It is night, which adds darkness to the stage and contributes to the deathly atmosphere, especially when we see a body lying on a 'cot' or type of camp bed. The **setting** tells us that the characters are poor, because the lightbulb has no shade, and the room is in a tenement, that is, a block of flats in a poor or slum area. The audience will be able to see immediately that the boy is dead and not just sleeping, because of the way his hands have been folded on his chest, and pennies (small coins) have been placed on his eyelids to keep them closed. You will notice that the playwright refers to a curtain that goes up. Most theatres have a curtain that goes up at the beginning of the play, and that is the first time we see the stage. However, this is not the case with workshopped plays, and many directors prefer to have the stage open at all times.

In this particular play, the stage directions are very important in telling us about **emotions**. We read here that the mother is *simulating* grief. The word *simulating* means 'pretending'. It would obviously be quite challenging for the actress to show false grief. It also makes us, as readers, wonder why a mother would pretend grief at the death of her son.

This lesson is not divided into separate activities. There is only one activity in this lesson, and it takes the form of the following project:

Play Project
Prepare for a production of the play 'Soul Gone Home' by following the steps listed below.

## How to put on a play

To put on a play, you need a little bit of time, a suitable space to rehearse and perform, and a group of willing participants. A play can be devised in a workshop (in which the group makes up its own story and words) or you can use an existing text. If you are using an existing text, each member of the cast will need a copy with his or her words underlined or marked with a luminous pen. Apart from the actors, you also need a director. The director usually decides who will take which role. The director also gives advice about how words should be spoken, and what gestures should be performed.

To complete this project in its entirety, you will need the co-operation of at least three friends (two of whom will have only a very small part to play), as well as a small space in which to perform. If you are unable to produce the play because of time or other constraints, try to complete items 1—3 of the project.

1 Read through the entire play and change the language so that it sounds like South African English. So, for example, 'Gawd' and 'Lawd' can be changed to 'God' and 'Lord' or some other appropriate exclamation.
2 Decide how many actors you need, and search the play for clues about the appearance (age, weight, etc) of these actors.
3 Make a list of props and costumes that you think are essential to the play, and which you think you can find without difficulty.

## GLOSSARY BOX

'Props' is an abbreviation of the word 'property'. It refers to a moveable object or item used in a production on a theatre stage or in a film. Props can include large objects such as furniture as well as smaller items such as a mirror, or a pack of cigarettes.

4 Get together with your friends and decide who will play which part. Make sure every actor has a copy of the play. Decide whether you are simply going to do a play reading, or whether you have the time and energy to put on the play complete with props and actions.
5 If you are going to put on the play, follow the director's schedule in the box below.
6 After you have performed the play, get together with your study group and discuss how the performance helped your understanding of the play.

### Director's Schedule

1 Choose a text and have copies made.
2 Call together a group of actors and assign roles.
3 Set a date when the play will be performed and invite an audience or organize publicity.
4 Hold a play reading where all the actors sit in a circle and simply read through their lines without acting.
5 Start rehearsals. At rehearsals, the director must guide actors in their portrayal of characters, in their actions and gestures.
6 Organize any props (e.g. items of furniture or utensils) needed in the performance. Props are not essential, and many plays are performed without any physical objects being used.
7 Organize costumes if necessary. If costumes are to be used, the director should try to follow the playwright's instructions in this regard.
8 Hold a dress rehearsal or final run through when the play is performed as it will be on opening night. The director must not interrupt this performance (no matter how badly the actors perform) and may only give his or her comments afterwards.
9 Accept the praise of the audience. If the audience does not like the play, blame the actors.

## Project Feedback

Putting the play into South African English should have helped you to understand it better. This activity also compelled you to read the play closely. You discovered that you needed two main characters, one female and one male. You also needed two further male actors to act as mortuary attendants. The mother is described as 'a large middle-aged woman'. The son is described as 'a very dark boy'. We also hear that he is sixteen years old and very thin as a result of the disease TB. For the mother you needed a red sweater and, later, an old fur coat and handbag. The son should be dressed in 'a torn white shirt'. Other props you need include a camp bed with quilts, two small coins, a comb, a stocking cap, a stretcher, a rubber cloth, a broken mirror, rouge and powder, a cigarette. As a special effect, you need the sound of a siren.



'Soul Gone Home' is not a difficult play to produce because it has few characters and limited action. Here are some of the things you may have noticed in your production of the play:

- the mother expresses a range of emotions and is the most interesting character on the stage;
- the audience probably laughed when Ronnie, the dead boy, started to talk;
- the audience probably laughed again when Ronnie complained 'You been a hell of a mama!';
- the drama was heightened when the actor playing Ronnie sat up in bed;
- the audience became quiet and was interested to hear the reasons for Ronnie's resentment;
- the relationship between mother and son did not remain constant: sometimes they showed love and sometimes hatred;
- the fact that the mother is a prostitute interested and/or shocked the audience;
- tension and drama was created when mother and son had to hurry in order to get him lying like a corpse again;
- the audience laughed when the mother started up her lament again;
- the mother's preparations to go out on the streets as a prostitute held the audience's attention;
- her final comment caused shocked laughter.

## Summary

By mounting (or preparing to mount) a production of 'Soul Gone Home', you developed a closer understanding of the play and the way it is put together. You discovered that a play — however short — is built up in a series of dramatic moments that are caused by shocking events, actions or statements, sudden revelations or new realisations. Above all, drama is created by the constant tension between characters and the emotions they arouse in one another and in the audience.

# ADDENDUM C

Source:

University of South Africa: Department of English. 1998. *Practical English: tutorial letter: 101/1998 for PEN100-3.* Pretoria.

## uestion 3: Letter Writing

iis article was written in 1991. A great deal has changed in this country since then. Choose one the teenagers interviewed. From your perspective on the New South Africa write a one-and-a-lf page letter to the teenager, telling him or her about the New South Africa, showing how things ive changed, and commenting on whether the teenager's hopes and/or fears have been realised.

# ECTION C: Reading with a purpose

e questions in this section are aimed at giving you practice in the following skills:

finding facts
extracting information from an article
selecting information for a particular purpose
writing a persuasive report

Read 'Dreaming in the Mealie Fields' on pp 127 - 129 of *Texts & Contexts.*

## iestion 1: Finding the Facts - People and Places

A number of people are mentioned in the article. Who are they and what are their personal details? How are they connected to the topic? Write short notes (key words or phrases) on each of the following people:

Martha Chomane
Selinah Tonyane
Paulus Ramashamole
Jane Evans
Maria Khoabane
Bonnie Ntsoeleng
Thelma Henderson

What did Jane Evans start in 1988, and where is it located?

What is *Ntataise*?

List the skills taught to the children.

What is the role of the farmers?

Explain how the project is funded. (NB There are a number of different ways in which the costs are covered - make sure you find them all!)

## Question 3: Letter Writing



This article was written in 1991. A great deal has changed in this country since then. Choose one of the teenagers interviewed. From your perspective on the New South Africa write a one-and-a-half page letter to the teenager, telling him or her about the New South Africa, showing how things have changed, and commenting on whether the teenager's hopes and/or fears have been realised.

# SECTION C: Reading with a purpose

The questions in this section are aimed at giving you practice in the following skills:

finding facts
extracting information from an article
selecting information for a particular purpose
writing a persuasive report

| Read 'Dreaming in the Mealie Fields' on pp 127 - 129 of *Texts & Contexts*. |
|---|

## Question 1: Finding the Facts - People and Places

1a A number of people are mentioned in the article. Who are they and what are their personal details? How are they connected to the topic? Write short notes (key words or phrases) on each of the following people:

Martha Chomane
Selinah Tonyane
Paulus Ramashamole
Jane Evans
Maria Khoabane
Bonnie Ntsoeleng
Thelma Henderson

1b What did Jane Evans start in 1988, and where is it located?

1c What is *Ntataise*?

1d List the skills taught to the children.

1e What is the role of the farmers?

1f Explain how the project is funded. (NB There are a number of different ways in which the costs are covered - make sure you find them all!)

## Question 2



The board deciding on the Shoprite-Checkers Woman of the Year award is calling for nominations. The letter below suggests that Jane Evans should be considered for this prize. Write a carefully worded one-and-a-half page motivation supporting the nomination.

---

*PO Box 318*
*Butterworth*
*4960*
*18 March 1998*

*The Chair*
*Woman of 98 Judging Committee*
*PO Box 680*
*Johannesburg*
*2000*

*Dear Sir / Madam*

*Nomination: Jane Evans*

*I would like to nominate Jane Evans for your Woman of the Year award. I feel that she has made an outstanding contribution to her community and to the future of the youth of this country. An outline of her efforts and contributions is presented in the attached motivation.*[1]

*Thank you for introducing and running this competition. I think it is really important for the efforts of "ordinary" people to be recognised and rewarded. The achievements of your past winners have served as shining examples to us all. I am confident that Jane Evans will be a worthy addition to the group.*

*Thank you for your attention.*

*Yours faithfully*
*Maria Khoabane (Mrs)*

---

Your motivation will be assessed using the following criteria:

---

[1] This is what you have to write - a one and a half page motivation to accompany this letter.

- ✓ Do you have an introductory paragraph which clearly tells your reader why you are writing?
- ✓ Do you have a concluding paragraph which sums up your argument convincingly?
- ✓ Is your report divided into a number of additional paragraphs, each with a main idea and a number of supporting sentences, which explain or illustrate the main idea, add details, and provide examples?
- ✓ Have you selected the best and most powerful evidence from the article in support of your argument?
- ✓ Have you used your own words, and not just copied from the article?
- ✓ Has your writing been checked for spelling, punctuation, and expression? If your own writing is full of mistakes, the judges on the committee will not value your opinion and recommendation!

## SECTION D: Working Mothers

The questions in this section are aimed at giving you practice in the following skills:

extensive reading
note-taking
summarising information
using information from various sources to support an argument
essay writing

The section is based on the topic of working mothers. Before you begin the set tasks, think about the following questions:

- ☼ Did your mother work when you were a child?
- ☼ If she did, what kind of work was it?
- ☼ What were her reasons for working?
- ☼ How did you as a child feel about her working? How did it affect you?
- ☼ What was your father's attitude to her working, or to working women in general?
- ☼ If your mother didn't work, what were the advantages and disadvantages of that for you as children?