



## Strategies for developing the reading skill through effective reading practices

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### ABSTRACT

*This research paper mainly focuses on developing the reading skills of the third-year students at the Computer University, Kalay, Burma. As reading is the most common skill, effective uses of practice reading strategies engage learners resulting incompetence in fluency and meaningful depiction of literary texts. The knowledge of reading in a foreign language is important for the students to take the responsibilities for their own learning and to use the acquired reading strategies to tackle the various kinds of texts both inside and outside the class. In this paper, some various effective techniques are mentioned to improve the students' abilities of reading. The important factors of the reading skills are showed to improve students' reading speed and to catch the general meaning of the message. Through needs analysis survey, needs lack, wants and attitudes of various students and teachers can be found out. It is hoped that this paper can give some insights into the difficulties faced by students and teachers who have no idea how to train students to be efficient and flexible readers and help the students make good use of their reading skill and how to handle it in the most effective way throughout their studies.*

**Keywords**— *Developing, Reading, Strategies*

### 1. INTRODUCTION

In the past, English language teaching in Myanmar laid great emphasis only on reading and writing. Due to the changes in political, economic and educational conditions together with the development of international relationships, there has been a shifting emphasis from these skills to other communicative skills. Reading skills cannot be ignored especially in practice today of IT age. So also, in academic studies, reading is still one of the essential skills because most of the information required is gathered through reading. Moreover, in this IT age, various types of information can be obtained from different sources such as encyclopedia, reference books, Internet Websites and so on. Most of the reading references available are written in English or translated into English. That is why students who wish to get knowledge need to know English first and foremost.

To fulfill this need to some extent, this paper is intended for students who need to improve their reading skills in their respective fields. Therefore, students must possess skills and strategies to tackle various kinds of texts both inside and outside the class. Being able to read skillfully and flexibly is an important use of language. In this paper, various definitions about reading, different reading skills, and strategies are mentioned because most reading texts demand one or more a number of different reading skills such as skimming for gist, scanning for specific information, reading for reference, reading for details and so on. Similarly, in order to gather information about the difficulties, needs, and attitudes of students and teachers towards reading skills, questionnaires have been used.

In this paper, general guidelines and specific suggestions for making more useful ways of reading strategies will be found. Therefore, the ultimate goal in this paper is to improve students' ability to transfer strategies from one reading text to another by using their awareness of the reading process.

### 2. LITERATURE REVIEW

Reading takes many forms. Reading means reading and understanding of the construction of meaning from a printed or written message. The construction of meaning involves the reader connecting information from the written message with previous knowledge to arrive at meaning – at an understanding. Frisby (1964) describes that reading is a mental act; it has been described as thinking under the stimulus of the written or printed page. The reader reads for pleasure and information. Therefore, it is said that reading is done mainly for the collection of ideas [3].

Salwa Ibrahim (1979) states that reading can be defined as an act of information processing. This act of information processing can break down as a result of a galaxy of factors – inadequate vocabulary, inability to handle grammatical structures, failure to recognize the logical connections between sentences, incorrect utilization of context, and/or complete novelty of the material. It follows that the positive counterparts of these factors are requisites for the successful achievement of this act of information

processing. In other words, successful reading involves a large number of factors: lexical, grammatical, sentence connections, paragraph organization, and many others [7].

Reading is not a single skill but a process comprising a complex set of interrelated skills. These involve:

- (a) Word recognition and mastery of basic vocabulary and such technical or specialized vocabulary as may from time to time be required,
- (b) The ability to see in the material the structures of the sentences, paragraphs, and longer passages that constitute the thought units,
- (c) The intelligence to follow the thought development thus presented and make any relevant deduction, inferences or critical assessments, and
- (d) The ability to concentrate on the reading task. (Macmillan 1965) [4]

**2.1 Correlation between reasons for reading and styles of reading**

Different reading texts require different reading styles according to different reasons and situations and reading involves an interaction between thought and language. The reader brings to the task a formidable amount of information and ideas, attitudes, and beliefs. This knowledge, coupled with the ability to make linguistic predictions, determines the expectations the reader will develop as he reads. Skill in reading depends on the efficient interaction between linguistic knowledge and knowledge of the world.

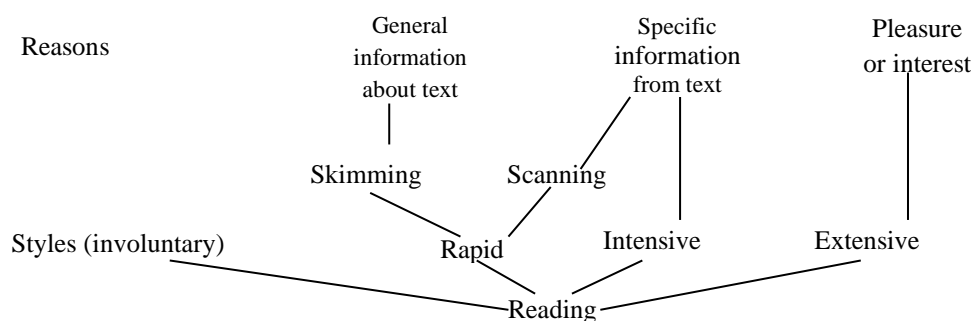
Although reading is a receptive skill, it is not a passive skill as it involves recognition of vocabulary and structure and interpretation. Reading is the most important activity in any language class, not only as a source of information and pleasurable activity but also as a means of consolidating and extending one’s knowledge of the language.

Reading research supports the view that reading is only incidentally visual. More information is contributed by the reader than by the print on the page. That is, readers understand what they read because they are able to take the stimulus beyond its graphic representation and assign its membership to an appropriate group of concepts already stored in their memories.

There are several reasons for reading. The reason will vary depending on the requirements of readers. Reasons for reading define which strategy or strategies to be used. For example, if the reason is to find out general information about the text, the reader reads it rapidly using the strategy of skimming. He does not pay attention to unknown words if they have no effect on getting the general idea of the text. Sometimes people read for pleasure and information, references, knowledge, occupational purposes, etc. Readers can increase their knowledge and understanding of the culture of the writers of the language, their ways of thinking, their contemporary activities, and their contributions to many fields of artistic and intellectual endeavor through reading. Similarly, the only reason for reading is to learn to read it and the style of reading depends on the readers’ needs. The fact that the foreign language learner lacks knowledge of the language often results in slow and intensive reading. In order to become an effective and efficient reader, he needs to have appropriate texts and appropriate tasks that allow him not only to develop his language but also to develop purposeful reading style.

To sum up, literacy is closely associated with reading and writing. In order to achieve the communication process, the reader has to perceive and decode the written text to get all the new information, subjects, experiences, and structures.

The following figure 1 summarizes the relationship between reasons for reading and styles of reading



**Fig. 1: Relationship between reasons for reading and styles of reading**

*Source: Williams (1984) [9]*

**2.2 The Role of Reader**

Reading means understanding the text which is full of meaning. To get the essence of the text effectively, the reader has to make sense of the text for himself because no one can catch reading ability from anyone.

In reading process, reader deals with writer from the perspective of the writer’s purpose: how and why messages in writers’ heads are turned into texts. Through reading, reader can get the knowledge of writing system as well as knowledge of language which enables him to work on the text. In terms of this, the reader will have not only interpretation ability but also appropriate knowledge of the world assumed by the writer. However, unless the writer has a sense of audience, he cannot be a competent writer or communication can fail. Although both of them have the same background knowledge, the reader may have misunderstanding in unfamiliar message. On both sides, lack of shared assumption is the worst problem to get interaction. Thus,

language comprehension depends on the activation of relevant knowledge, the application of the reader’s own effort, willingness, motivation, etc. Similarly, competent readers recognize, and decode quickly and accurately, words, grammatical structures, and other linguistic features, and are unaware of the process as they engage in learning. In other words, a fluent reader has a good knowledge of language structure and can recognize a wide range of vocabulary automatically.

In order to understand meaningfully, the reader has to actively work on the text to get the meaning out because the text is fed with letters, words, and sentences. Moreover, as a passive reader, he cannot absorb all the meanings in the text because the text has no guarantee for any reader. It is also important for readers how to achieve global understanding, that is, to understand the text as a whole and to be able to relate it to other text, another source of knowledge, personal experience and so on. To be a competent reader, it is important for a reader to know whether he understands or not.

It is clear that reader needs to be active, so the active participation of the reader is important. But reading is traditionally regarded as a receptive skill. In early accounts of reading, the reader was seen as passive: reading along with listening was referred to as “passive skill.” However, it is not a passive skill. Reading is an active skill. It constantly involves guessing, predicting, checking, and asking oneself questions. Moreover, the reader has to interpret the appropriate meaning for that particular context and he has to infer what the writer implies. All the meanings in the text cannot be understood through passive reading. Teachers need to encourage students to be active as they read. Active participation means that students are required to do any of the following: follow the order of ideas in a text; react to the opinions expressed; understand the information it contains; ask themselves questions; make notes; confirm expectations or prior knowledge; predict the next part of the text from various clues. To achieve the communication process and follow the writer’s ideas, both the reader and writer should have the same background knowledge as well as the same language background. And the reader should not be a passive reader. The following table 2.1 shows the difference between active and passive readers.

**Table 2: Active versus Passive Readers**

Active versus Passive Readers	
<p>Active Readers</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Tailor their reading to suit each assignment.</li> <li>• Analyze the purpose of an assignment.</li> <li>• Adjust their speed to suit their purpose.</li> <li>• Question ideas in the assignments.</li> <li>• Compare and connect textbook material with lecture content.</li> <li>• Skim headings to find out what assignment is about before beginning to read.</li> <li>• Make sure they understand what they are reading as they go along.</li> <li>• Read with a pencil in hand, highlighting, jotting down notes, and marking key vocabulary.</li> <li>• Develop personalized strategies that are particularly effective.</li> </ul>	<p>Passive Readers</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Read all assignments in the same way.</li> <li>• Read an assignment because it was assigned.</li> <li>• Read everything at the same speed.</li> <li>• Accept whatever is in print as truth.</li> <li>• Study lecture notes and textbook separately.</li> <li>• Check the length of an assignment and then begin reading.</li> <li>• Read until the assignment is completed.</li> <li>• Simply read.</li> <li>• Follow routine, standard methods.</li> </ul>

Source: Whorter (2005) [8]

**2.3 The Responsibilities of the Teacher**

Like the teachers, they have a number of responsibilities towards conducting a successful effective reading in class. The principal function is to make the students concentrate on the text and give them a clear purpose for reading. Teachers are the only persons who read the students’ work, so they have to use language carefully. Both verbal and nonverbal languages affect the students’ receptivity because it is necessary to monitor the speed of speaking and using vocabulary that the students can understand. Reading involves skills that the students must learn for themselves, and the measure of the teachers’ success is how far the students learn to do without the teachers’ help. The students must develop their own skills, but the teacher has to make them aware of what they are doing, what kind of guidance they can be given without undermining the whole purpose, and how much help they can get to become effective independent readers. Generally, the responsibilities of the teachers are as follows:

- (a) Finding out what the students can do and what they cannot, and working out a program aimed at giving them the skills they need,
- (b) Choosing a suitable text to work on,
- (c) Choosing or devising tasks and activities to develop the required skills,
- (d) Preparing the class to undertake the tasks,
- (e) Making sure that everyone in the class works productively and extracting maximum effort and best results by encouraging the students, and by promoting and probing until they produce the answer, instead of telling them what it is, and
- (f) Making sure that everyone in the class improves steadily according to his own capabilities [1].

In summary, to promote independent or self-learning, the teacher should provide the students with a wide range of activities focusing either on the content of the text, for example, debate, role-play, reading of contrasting texts, or on its language. These activities can make the students develop and get competence and confidence, which involve preparation and practice in the supportive environment of the classroom.

**3. DEVELOPING READING STRATEGIES**

The focus of the reading lesson is neither language alone nor content alone but the two together. The teacher wants the students to learn how language is used for conveying content and to develop the skills needed to extract the content from the language that

expresses it. Therefore, when the teacher prepares a text, it is necessary to consider what sort of interpretative skills it demands and what methods he will be able to use to help the students develop. So the right guidance should be given to the students before they begin to read the text.

### **3.1. Types of Reading**

Learners must be taught a wide range of reading skills to meet the varied requirements of education and the outside world. This means that opportunities must be created for a variety of kinds of reading activities to fulfill a variety of purposes. It also means the explicit teaching of some skills.

The type of reading (sometimes called reading strategy) will be determined predominantly by the purpose of the reading. Some important categories are skimming and scanning.

**3.1.1. Skimming and Scanning:** In skimming, words in a text may be ignored or skipped and this leads to improving reading speed. Nuttal (1982) says: "Skimming means glancing rapidly through a text to determine its gists". By skimming, students search quickly through the sentences to find facts and answers to questions they may have before they read closely. It gives readers the advantages of being able to predict the purpose of the passage, the main topic, and possibly supporting or developing ideas [6]. The purpose of skimming is simply to see what a text is about. The reader skims in order to satisfy a very general curiosity about the text, and not to find the answer to particular questions. Skimming may sometimes be the prerequisite of reading for full understanding.

The most valuable category is scanning, or quickly searching for some particular piece or pieces of information in a text. According to Nuttal (1982), "Scanning means glancing rapidly through a text either to search for a specific piece of information (e.g. a name, a date, etc.) or to get an initial impression of whether the text is suitable for a given purpose (e.g. whether a book on gardening deals with the cultivation of a particular vegetable)"[6]. The purpose of scanning is to extract specific information without reading through the whole text. For academic English, scanning is absolutely essential. Scanning occurs when a reader goes through a text very quickly in order to find a particular point of information. Scanning is used to quickly gather the most important information or gist.

**3.1.2. Word-attack Skills:** Readers do not necessarily need good listening, speaking, and writing skills. But they need to be able to recognize the meaning and function of most of the language elements in the texts they read.

Naturally, readers do not know every word in the texts. One of the problems for an FL reader is that his vocabulary is not good enough for the reading he has to do. So, he should know how to tackle the words and how to use word-attack skills.

To develop in reading, Nation and Coady suggested a five-step sequence to deal with a text for learners to follow with reasonable comprehension. They are:

- (a) Finding the part of speech of the unknown word,
- (b) Looking at the immediate context of the unknown word and simplifying this context if necessary,
- (c) Looking at the wider context of the unknown word, which means looking at the relationship between the clause containing the unknown word and surrounding clauses and sentences,
- (d) Guessing the meaning of the unknown word, and
- (e) Checking that the guess is correct.

(Nation and Coady 1988: 104-5) [5].

Moreover, not all new words are difficult. Any word that has more than one meaning is bound to cause trouble to the inexperienced readers. Everyday words are used in specialized senses, so dangerous misunderstanding may arise. Dealing with news lexical items and word-attack skills are equally relevant to FL students.

It is important for students to approach new words positively and use specific techniques to deal with them. Students need to ignore many new words. There are also techniques that can be used to deal with the new words that really stand in the way of comprehension.

**3.1.3 Text-attack Skills:** Text-attack skill means the process of interpreting the text as a whole, using all the clues available including cohesion and rhetorical structure. It is assumed that each feature of a text (cohesion, functional value, rhetorical organization, etc.) requires a particular interpretative skill. This makes description easier and helps to focus and simplify the complex process of comprehension. The various text-attack skills must be seen as a way of focusing attention, not as an attempt to keep separate skills that are tightly bound up with each other. Moreover, text-attack skills are central to the reading process and are complex and under-described. To pursue these skills, it is necessary to have a text which exhibits the characteristics of true discourse [2].

**3.1.4 Identifying Main Ideas and Supporting Details:** Although some students understand all the sentences in the reading material some do not understand what it is saying as a whole because they do not know how the material is organized. To enable them to understand a text clearly, the students should have the ability to identify main ideas and supporting details. So, the students have to find ideas, or thoughts that put facts together. Reading for ideas means looking for the author's conclusion.

A piece of writing often presents many ideas, yet these ideas usually relate to one important idea. In order to understand how these ideas, fit together, the students need to spot the main idea that gives an overall meaning to the reading. Students must identify what the paragraph is about – that is what the topic is. Through ideas and facts from the paragraph, the students have to identify the topic of a paragraph, the main idea of a paragraph and supporting details.



After finding the topic, students must look for the main idea in the topic sentences. If the paragraph has no topic sentences, students should make up their own topic sentence by drawing the required information from the paragraph.

Moreover, it is necessary for students to identify the functions of important supporting details. The students should know about longer paragraphs. The longer paragraphs are packed with more information, the more details will be necessary for the summary than just the main idea. These details providing more information about the main idea are called supporting details.

A question that may be used in IELTS to test the students' understanding of the main ideas in a passage is a summary with gaps and a box of possible answers to choose from. The summary may cover the main ideas presented over a large area of the text and so it will be necessary for the students to have a good understanding of these.

Before selecting important supporting details, students should practice in identifying the topic, main ideas, and important details. If the students are able to find main ideas and supporting details, they not only can write a summary but also can understand the whole paragraph. Therefore, identifying main ideas and supporting details are important for students to be independent readers.

**3.1.5 Summarising:** In summarising, the students combine the main ideas and the major detail of a reading passage in a new, shorter statement. This statement fits together all the important parts into a corrected whole. When doing a summary, the students must think about what is important and how to phrase each idea briefly. But they also think about how the parts fit together and they must show that connection through the way they write the summary.

The summary should be about a quarter or a third as long as the original. To make a good summary, the students have to think carefully about what is really important in the passage and what is not. Underlying or listing main ideas and major information will help the students to decide what to include in their summary. Crossing out minor information in the original can also help them what not to include. A summary must be a readable piece of writing.

### **3.1.6 Interpreting Discourse Markers**

Many discourse markers in English signal relationships among ideas as expressed through phrases, clauses, and sentences. A clear comprehension of such markers can greatly enhance students' reading efficiency. Interpreting discourse markers signals the relationships between different parts of the discourse, and often indicates the functional value of the sentence in which they occur. There are three main classes that the markers signal:

Group A markers: signals of a sequence of events

Group B markers: signals of discourse organization

Group C markers: signals of the writer's point of view

If the students understand the discourse markers effectively, they can know how to interpret a stretch of text such as an observation, reinforcement, a conclusion or some other act of communication.

**3.1.7 Interpreting non-verbal features of discourse:** The writer sometimes uses not only verbal text but also non-verbal devices such as diagrams, maps, graphs, flowcharts, etc. in order to communicate something. This kind of non-verbal communication can be found especially in scientific texts. This reading as understanding discourse involves not only interpreting the verbal text but also interpreting non-verbal devices that are incorporated into the discourse and related to the actual verbal text to form a cohesive and coherent unit of discourse.

## **4. CURRENTCLASSROOM SITUATIONS IN TEACHING READING**

The aim of our national education system is to equip the students with the knowledge and skills they need to meet and succeed in the 21st century and to sustain and expand our education system, all teachers from educational organization must help the students achieve national quality standard and improve them both teaching and learning with the help of multimedia. To transform this education system, teachers should try to change traditional teaching style, teacher-centered approach into student-centered one that can create interaction between students and teachers. Teachers should focus on improving students' learning and try to create interactive teaching techniques to upgrade the teaching-learning process. In reality, not every teacher is willing to change their traditional teaching styles. Even though they may know they should change their teaching style, they cannot make a big change in their teaching because of many factors such as the need of appropriate teaching materials to engage their teaching with students, limited teaching aids like computers, projectors, etc., a small classroom, no language lab for listening skill and time constraint. It may be impossible for every teacher to implement interactive language teaching in English due to a great number of students at each level and a limited number of teachers in most universities. Teaching large classes may be difficult for a teacher to engage their teaching with students' preferences. For these reasons, educators in educational society should try to find solutions intentionally to recover these weaknesses.

During finding out the best solutions, teachers are trying to make the most effective curricula and relevant materials that will be flexible for every student in their classroom to help their students' language skills improve. Although teachers have a key role to implement active learning classes and device interesting and useful tasks and activities, co-operation of the teachers who are dealing with the students in the classroom is very important. Reading activities can also be used to engage in meaningful interaction and maintain comprehensible and ongoing communication despite limitations in his or her communicative competence. The activities focusing on fluency have features like a natural use of language, communication, meaningful use of language, use of communicative strategies, producing language that may not be predictable, and seeking to link language use to context.

## **5. DATA ANALYSIS**

Questionnaires are provided to know information about the students, language teachers, and subject teachers. Questionnaires are given to the third-year computer university students who are attending the University of Computer Studies, Kalay. There are altogether fifty students. And also, questionnaires are given to eight language teachers from Language Department and thirty subject teachers at Computer University, Kalay. Through questionnaires, the actual needs lack, and wants of the students can be found out. According to the result of questionnaires, the needs of students who are facing difficulties in reading skills and the needs of students who want to know not only strategies how to read a reading passage but also the meaning of this passage how to guess and understand, etc. have been found. So, the teachers should explain the reading strategies clearly and patiently and let them know how to tackle different reading passages by the use of different reading strategies. And this can help the students' reading skills develop.

## **6. FINDINGS**

Findings of the study reveal that most students accept the reading skill is the most important requirement for them in studying their subjects and they need to read a lot of texts and reference books, e-books and so on. However, they feel uncomfortable with the English language from textbooks because of textual difficulty, unfamiliar vocabulary, linguistic difficulty and so on. They have no ability to tackle new words and phrases. So, they cannot answer comprehension questions and they lose interest. But they have a strong desire to improve their reading skill and positive attitudes towards learning English and they need to know reading strategies and ways to develop the reading and comprehension skills.

Concerning subject teachers, they all are interested in reading and claim that content mastery depends on language mastery. Although the majority of the subject teachers have been teaching different specialized subjects, they want to improve their English language skills and apply the knowledge gained from the text by reading. Moreover, all the subject textbooks they read are written in English, so they have to translate the text for the students to be understood. They said that reading skill is important for both teachers and learners. They have to use English as a medium of instruction in their reading subjects, reading references, producing teaching materials, making notes and so on.

Although they are master's degree holders or Ph.D. degree holders, they still want to improve English because the textbooks and reference books they read become more sophisticated and complicated. So, they have positive attitudes towards learning English. Personally, most of the subject teachers are well-motivated, having a strong desire to improve their reading skills.

As regards language teachers, they all are interested in reading and they also want to master the reading skill. Reading involves a variety of micro-skills. Being language teachers, they have to find out different views of language teaching which encompass a multifaceted understanding of the teaching and learning process, thereby having some knowledge of the essential skills of teaching and different approaches to the preparation. Moreover, they think that they have to use different reading strategies depending on the importance of the text. They should have enough time allotment for developing reading English and they have to give clear instructions and purposes. They said that if they can give enough practice, the students can master new strategies in reading.

They also said that good reading skill is vital for academic studies. The ability to use a variety of skills under the reading skill helps the students tackle most questions in the examination more effectively. It is also important that students should have plenty of exposure to extended texts in order to develop their reading skills and confidence needed to deal with them. The reading text presents a wide variety of styles and approaches, and sources include books, newspapers, magazines, and journals as well as the Internet. Therefore, students should be trained a full range of reading skills including prediction, skimming or scanning, sampling a text and distinguishing facts from opinion, and so on.

They suggest that in order to build the students' confidence and proficiency through systematic reading development, teachers have to choose texts and tasks which motivate highlight key strategies and encourage students to play an active role in their own learning. According to the information collected by the questionnaires, teachers have positive attitudes towards their teaching and students should be trained to improve their reading skills by giving effective reading practice a lot. As mentioned above, all teachers and learners wish to master the reading skill. They are generally highly-motivated and they all need teaching-learning reading strategies that reinforce their reading skill developments.

## **7. PROPOSED CLASSROOM ACTIVITIES TOWARDS A BETTER TEACHING AND LEARNING ENVIRONMENT**

The research study focuses on ways to develop reading skills and strategies that motivate students' reading comprehension. If they know these strategies, they can read different materials with different reading rates and achieve their global understanding, which understands the text as a whole and to be able to relate it to other text, another source of knowledge, personal experience and so on. For teachers, it is suggested that if they use a wide range of reading activities that meet the students' needs and wants, students can tackle with the authentic texts effectively. Before teaching, teachers should know their students' needs and wants well in order to manage their classes effectively and help them identify what their purpose for reading, preview texts, make predictions, determine the important idea in what they read, and so on. To become strong, flexible, and devoted readers of texts, students need a wide range of experiences in reading texts with different reading styles and encourage them to be active and good readers with the help of effective reading practices like prediction, think-aloud, storytelling, etc. It is an excellent idea to start the first day of the school by having the students set positive goals to adjust them to get better mindset that would help students to tackle the increasing challenges they will be facing and to have a brighter future. The best way to create an interactive classroom is to make small changes to the classrooms of today. Moving desks around, using movable furniture, installing projectors and other electronic devices and asking students for ideas are the best ways to upgrade the traditional classrooms into smarter ones. Therefore, teachers

need to prepare themselves for these classrooms to promote their teaching skills with IT devices. Thus, students can become interested in reading passages and develop their reading skills in their academic studies and needs. Most of the universities have started implementing these changes in some of the rooms as computer and language labs. Thus, teachers should replace their traditional teaching styles with PowerPoint presentations that make students more interested in their teaching-learning situation. The more skillful teachers are at their teaching, the better the teaching-learning process can be created. Moreover, teacher training plays a vital role in creating a harmonized teaching-learning environment. Teachers need to be well-trained to upgrade their teaching skills in order to create the most appropriate materials and to tackle the problems in their classrooms. Using effective reading techniques and providing the students with active reading activities like games, debates, listen and read activities, etc. can be of great help to both English language teachers and students. By doing so, students will be naturally motivated to learn independently: they will know what to read carefully, what to read quickly, what not to read, what to reread, and so on and they can read different kinds of text differently. For teachers, they can perform as facilitators by asking questions and providing guidance for their students' acquisition of knowledge.

## **8. CONCLUSION**

The aim of this research report is to highlight the importance of developing the reading skill for the students at the University of Computer Studies, Kalay, Burma. The reason is that English is prescribed as a compulsory subject and other major subjects are written in English. Moreover, the reading skill is not only for academic studies or needs but also for communication skills. That is why students should have knowledge of the reading skill.

Especially, at the higher-level education, EFL learners have to struggle with many reference books. Most of the reference books are written in English, so they have great difficulty in trying to understand these books. For those learners, they have to use various reading strategies to get ideas read the text intensively, segmenting clauses, interpreting references, substitutions, and ellipsis in the mind. By doing so, they can understand the text more easily. While reading, if they find difficult vocabulary or textual difficulty, they can use dictionaries, encyclopedias, and other references. If there is still a problem with meanings of a word or a sentence, they have to consult human resources such as professors, teachers, and other teaching staff. Moreover, they have to reread the text and prepare a note on it. It is important for the students because no one can catch readability from anyone.

Through various reading strategies and activities, students can become not only good readers but also good learners. These strategies can help the learners enjoy reading because the activities for these strategies create the opportunity to have challenging real-life situations as well as to meet the academic needs. All the reading strategies in this paper are actually combinations of many strategies and the learners need to apply them appropriately according to their needs.

To be competent readers, there is no way to develop the students' reading skill except by reading a lot. But the use of various reading strategies can help them to be more effective readers. What is more, teachers have to encourage the students to read a lot and create more interesting activities to draw their attention. Thus, it is hoped that after applying the reading strategies and classroom activities, most of the students who are originally reluctant and non-confident become self-reliant independent readers. For teachers, they can conduct a more effective, responsive reading class.

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