



**ASSESSING THE LEVEL OF UNDERSTANDING OF PREREQUISITE SKILLS OF READING
AND REFLECTING ON TEXT PRIOR TO ABILITY COURSE AMONG
PRE-SERVICE TEACHERS**

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Abstract:

A text permits individual to discuss their thoughts with each other irrespective of the boundaries of place and time etc. For sure, a huge piece of what every individual knows originates from understanding his /her writings. Hence reading a text is definitely a strong way to communicate ones' thoughts or opinions across masses. In-depth reading paves way for reflecting on a text that helps in developing rational and practical skills for lifetime learning. Hence taking the above target into consideration University of Mumbai has introduced a specialized course named Ability course which is a concrete part of the practicum component of the B.Ed. course and an important part of this course is Reading and reflecting on texts. This course enables students to read and respond to variety of texts in different ways and enables student-teachers to enhance their capacities as readers and writers by becoming participants in the process of reading. The main purpose of this study was to assess the pre service teachers' level of understanding of the prerequisite skills of reading and reflecting on text prior to the ability course.

Key words: *Ability course, pre requisite skills, pre service teachers*

Introduction:

Intrinsic motivation is the most operative factor that influences the acquisition and workout of reading proficiency. Both ability and determination are needed to be a perfect reader. The empirical evidence poised by the author through literature review discloses that there is a decline in reading behaviors among the pre-service teachers. Applegate, & Applegate in 2004 observed that majority of the pre-service teachers are not avid readers themselves and this lack of engagement may pass on to their students. This situation however can prove to be very challenging as if the teachers themselves don't develop the habit of reading and reflecting on a text, then how the younger generation can be motivated to read and expand their knowledge. The researcher read several literature reviews which stated that pre-service teachers are not passionate readers. Oguz, Yıldız, , & Hayırsever, 2009 conducted a study which exposed that about 45% of the future



teachers barely ever read or did not read at all. The pathetic excuse by the future teachers for not reading books more is “lack of time (56,6%)” which itself is captivating.² A similar kind of investigation was carried out by Kennedy, (2014) who used Children's Literature Student Survey to find out the reading habits and attitudes of students who have registered themselves in the teacher education program at a university in Pennsylvania. Outcomes specified that applicants were not passionate readers notwithstanding overall positive spirits about their initial elementary reading practices. Hence, reviewing the literature activated the researcher to conduct a study about how much of the pre service teachers read and write for different purposes and are able to express freely about their thinking process, thereby being able to comprehend and repair their own misunderstandings, being able to connect with the text and developing one's own standpoint before they are being introduced with the course of Reading and reflecting on text which is an important part of the B.Ed. practicum component.

Looking at the NCTE framework, it clearly states that the teacher education program should be planned in such a way which will lead to skill development. Hence University of Mumbai introduced the Ability course -II Reading and reflecting on text. This course teaches pre service teachers to respond to various types of texts in divergent ways. Students learn to respond creatively and critically, also being meticulously aware of their own thinking process and thereby learning to write with a sense of purpose keeping in mind the targeted audience. Thus resulting in capacity building skills with regards to efficient reading and writing.

Need of the study: Learning using various texts and resources help the students in developing skills to interpret, understand and develop one's own perspective after reading. This helps the students to be lifelong learners and be successful in whatever they indulge in. Reading and reflecting on a text not only encourages students to develop reading habits throughout but also gain content mastery, self-evaluate continuously by reflecting critically on what is being read. There has been evidence that shows that our University students are reluctant readers and they struggle to write for different purposes. As the goal of any teacher education programme is to prepare teachers as reflective practitioners³. Hence, Ability course reading and reflecting on texts provide ample opportunities to the student teachers to read the given texts and then to critically examine the ideas presented in the texts. The purpose of this paper is to find out how much is the level of understanding among pre service teachers with regards to reading and reflecting on a text. Hence there was a need to find out answers to the following questions:-

1. How much is the level of understanding of the following basic skills needed for the ability course - Reading and reflecting on text?
 - a. Identification / Recognition
 - b. Prediction
 - c. Bricolage
2. How do the above skills be developed among pre service teachers before the actual implementation of the course?



Statement of the Problem: To find out the level of prerequisite skills possessed by the pre service teachers prior to the ability course of Reading and reflecting on text.

Objectives of the Study:

1. To assess the level of understanding of below given prerequisite skills of reading and reflecting on text prior to ability course among pre-service teachers
 - a. Identification / Recognition
 - b. Prediction
 - c. Bricolage
2. To compare the level of understanding of below given prerequisite skills of reading and reflecting on text among pre-service teachers
 - a. Identification / Recognition
 - b. Prediction
 - c. Bricolage

Hypothesis: There is no significant difference in the level of understanding of prerequisite skills possessed by pre service teachers as reflected in their means before being trained for Reading and reflecting on text- Ability course

: In this study, a quantitative method of data collection was used to collect and analyse the data obtained

Methodology from the respondents. The investigator developed the questionnaire and got its validation done by experts before being administered to the targeted group of pre service teachers. The questionnaire consisted of statements catering to prerequisite skills of Reading and reflecting on text such as Identification / Recognition, Prediction and Bricolage. These skills helped the researcher in analysing the level of understanding that the pre-service teachers have in them before the implementation of the ability course. The data collected through respondents was further made quantifiable in order to interpret the results.

Sample: The study engaged 50 pre service teachers from five different B.Ed. colleges who were selected through randomization technique in order to avoid any kind of prejudices. These pre service teachers were from SYB.Ed. class who were not revealed with the Reading and reflecting on text course. They were further dispensed with the questionnaire before the actual implementation of the Ability course of reading and reflecting on text to gain the insight about the existing prerequisite skills required for the course.

Tool: In order to collect data, respondents were provided with a questionnaire having 21 statements that helped to analyse the existing skills among pre service teachers. The questionnaire had items developed on the skills of Identification/Recognition, Prediction and Bricolage. This questionnaire was further validated by the experts and the tool was modified after receiving suggestions from the experts. This tool has a five point likert scale ranging from 1= Strongly Agree, 2= Agree, 3= Undecided 4= Disagree, 5= Strongly Disagree.

Data Analysis: The data collected from pre service teachers was analysed. Both descriptive and inferential



data techniques were used for analysis. All the data collected from the respondents were gathered together to be analysed. The investigator used descriptive analysis to analyse the mean and mean percentage of the responses. Besides, it is also used to determine One way ANOVA test to identify the difference in the level of understanding of prerequisite skills possessed by student teachers before being trained for an Ability course - Reading and reflecting on text.

Analysis and Interpretation

Descriptive and inferential statistics both were used to analyse the data . The below given table shows the mean difference between the level of understanding of the prerequisite skills possessed by student teachers. Table 1. Mean difference between Prerequisite skills- Identification/ Recognition, Prediction and Bricolage skills.

Sr. No.	Type of Skills	N	Mean	'P' Value
1.	Identification/Recognition skills	50	37	1.99
2.	Prediction skills	50	16.38	
3.	Bricolage skills	50	16.42	

It is evident from table -1 that the mean of Identification/ recognition skill is 37, Prediction skill is 16.38 and Bricolage skills is 16.42. Which is less than 50% that indicates that student teachers have very little understanding about the prerequisite skills required to learn the Reading and reflecting on text ability course. Hence it is also indicative that the pre service teachers require much more practice to develop expertise in these skills in order to learn many more enhanced skills related to reading and reflecting upon diverse texts. The above table also shows the 'p' value is $1.99 > 0.05$. Which suggests feeble evidence against the null hypothesis. Thus the null hypothesis is accepted. Hence it is inferred that there is no significant difference in the level of understanding of pre requisite skills possessed by student teachers before being trained for the course of Reading and reflecting on text. Thus, it can be said that student teachers have almost the same level of understanding about the prerequisite skills prior to the Reading and reflecting on text course. Hence the teacher educators must take into consideration the existing skills among student teachers and plan their activities/tasks for the Reading and reflecting on text content keeping these existing skills in their mind. This will help student teachers to develop much more advanced skills through the course.

Eg- Students know to comprehend any text but they should also practice responding to a variety of text by critically analysing the text, question the text and present their own viewpoints and be aware of their own thinking process.

The above graph also indicates that the mean of Identification/ recognition skill is 37 , Prediction skill is 16.38 and Bricolage skills is 16.42. which is less than 50% that indicates that student teachers have little understanding about the prerequisite skills required to learn the Reading and reflecting on text ability course. Student teachers need some more training and practice to gain proficiency in these prerequisite skills and



hence teacher educators can conduct the investigation on student teacher's existing skills so as to understand the techniques that can be employed for implementing the tasks of the Ability course Reading and reflection on text.

Recommendations and Conclusion: The main purpose of this paper is to put forth the results of this research that specifies that pre service teachers have some understanding about the skills related to reading and reflection of text but these existing skills are not sufficient and student teachers need some more training and practice in order to learn more advanced skills through the course of Reading and Reflecting on text. Teacher educators can definitely do some analysis before actually implementing the course which will give teacher educators a better understanding about the understanding levels among student teachers and accordingly teacher educators can design and conduct various enriching tasks of the syllabus and thereby indulge in significant learning that can be enforced in various other fields or situations. Hence teacher educators can develop a proper plan before implementing the tasks/ activities and continuously monitor the understanding levels of the student teachers also to keep a track and evaluate their own thinking process. As a teacher it must be our aspiration to ensure that we help student teachers develop these analytical skills and allow them to indulge in Critical appreciation of the text and thereby achieving the objectives of the course Reading and reflecting on text sensibly.

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