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Designing a reading literacy curriculum for secondary school students in Egypt

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DESIGNING A READING LITERACY CURRICULUM FOR SECONDARY

SCHOOL STUDENTS IN EGYPT

A thesis submitted to the University of Durham for the degree of

Doctor of Philosophy

By

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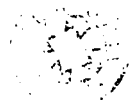
2009

DECLARATION

This thesis is as a result of my research and has not been submitted for any other degree in any other university.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

DEDICATION

To my wife Enas and my children Mohamed and Moadh

To my supervisors: Dr Sue Beverton and Professor Mike Byram

ABSTRACT

Abdelaziz Mohamed A. Hussien

Designing a reading literacy curriculum for secondary school students in Egypt

A thesis submitted for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy; Durham University, U.K., School of Education, 2009.

The key contribution of this research is to produce a proposal for a reading literacy curriculum design (RLCD) for secondary school students (15-17 year-old) in Egypt. This proposal includes four major components: targets, assessment, instruction, and content. Two complementary dimensions are investigated: the theoretical analysis (the researcher's perspective based upon analysis of reading literacy research) and the fieldwork (the empirical study using a questionnaire for teachers and supervisors and a semi-structured interview for other professionals). Those two dimensions are charted through seven chapters and introduction to and conclusion of these chapters.

Following an introduction to the research problem, purposes, questions, structure, rationale, and parameters, the successive focus of these chapters is on:

- Clarifying the Egyptian context in terms of education system, culture of learning, critical analysis of the actual reading situation and how all of these elements reveal the gap between 'what is' and 'what ought to be' in RLCD in the secondary school in Egypt (Chapter one);

- Reading literacy theory: the concept of reading literacy, dimensions, and models and how these can be used a baseline for RLCD (Chapter two);

- Theoretical analysis of reading literacy targets and assessment, the first two components of RLCD (Chapter three);

- Theoretical analysis of reading literacy instruction and content, the other two components of RLCD (Chapter four);

- Research methodology, where survey design was employed and mixed methods were used: a questionnaire and a semi-structured interview. The major aim was

to collect data to find out if the practitioners (i.e. secondary school teachers and supervisors) and other professionals (i.e. specialists in curriculum and instruction) in Egypt agree with the reading literacy research (chapter five);

- Data analysis, where a descriptive statistical analysis was conducted for data provided by the questionnaire and a cross-sectional or code and retrieve analysis strategy was applied for data provided by the semi-structured interview. Results indicated that the practitioners' perceptions on the questionnaire and the professionals' answers in the semi-structured interview supported what was revealed by the theoretical analysis regarding RLCD. This suggests that the proposed RLCD is a practical proposition and it is timely to do it. It also raises the confidence in RLCD by triangulation of data by using the questionnaire for the practitioners and the semi-structured interview for other professionals and relating all of this to literature analysis (Chapter six);

- Developing the proposal (RLCD): its scope, framework, and components: targets, assessment, instruction, and content. The researcher combines all sources of data: the theoretical analysis, the questionnaire data, and the semi-structured interview data (Chapter seven).

The conclusion of the research is introduced. It presents a summary of the research and most importantly, it provides a summary of the contribution of the present research to reading literacy curriculum in theory and practice. Deriving from its results, some recommendations for practice and further research are made and a closing reflective epilogue on the research and the researcher is provided.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS/ACRONYMS

MSAL- Modern Standard Arabic Language

CA- Colloquial Arabic

AAUC- Association for American Colleges and Universities

ARG- Assessment Reform Group

NIFL- National Institute for Literacy

DFEE- Department for Education and Employment

ESCR13- Education Service Centre Region 13

ETS – Educational Testing Service

FRDLC- Federal Research Division of the Library of Congress

PIRLS- Progress in International Reading Literacy Study

OECD- Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development

NAGB- National Assessment Governing Board

NRP- National Reading Panel

PSDE- Pennsylvania State Department of Education

UNDP- United Nations Development Programme

RLT- Reading Literacy Targets

RLF- Reading Literacy Fluency

NAEP- National Assessment of Educational Progress

SRL- Strategic Reading Literacy

RLE- Reading Literacy Engagement

RLA- Reading Literacy Assessment

ZPD- Zone of Proximal Development

SA- Static Assessment

DA- Dynamic Assessment

AR- Accelerated Reader

RLCD- Reading Literacy Curriculum Design

CBCD- Centrally-Based Curriculum Design

SBCD- School-Based Curriculum Design.

FRLA- Framework for Reading Literacy Assessment

TA- Theoretical Analysis

ES- Empirical Study

DLA- Deep Learning Approach

SLA- Surface Learning Approach

LA- Liberationist Approach

FA- Facilitative Approach

IA- Instructive Approach

RL- Renaissance Learning

CAQDAS - Computer-Assisted Qualitative Data Analysis

INTRODUCTION TO THE RESEARCH

The argument is that 'reading literacy' is important as a tool for learning and living. The essence of the concept of 'reading literacy' is "the ability to understand and use those written language forms required by society and/or valued by the individual" (Mullis et al, 2004: 3). The social significance of reading literacy is that

readers can construct meaning from a variety of texts. They read to learn, to participate in communities of readers in school and everyday life, and for enjoyment (p. 3).

Teaching reading literacy is very critical to develop students' understanding, fluency, strategic reading, motivation for reading, or meta-reading (students' awareness of their own reading), and students use their reading ability for effective participation in and out of school or just to entertain themselves. They use it as a tool for learning, living, or for recreation. Wade and Moje (2000: 617) stress the importance of using reading literacy as a tool for communication.

Eventually, school, from the very beginning to the end of school education, is meant to develop students' reading literacy. Of course, the main focus of this development differs relatively from one stage to another. The concern of primary school is not of the same order as the concern of secondary school in promoting reading literacy. It can be argued that in first primary grades reading literacy is relatively concerned with decoding while in secondary grades it is initially concerned with understanding, but this does not mean that decoding and understanding are separate processes. Rather, reading literacy processes are simultaneous (Ruddell & Unrau, 1994, 2004; Rumelhart, 1994, 2004), as can be inferred from automaticity theory (LaBerge & Samuels, 1974; Samuels, 1976, 1994, 2004).

Secondary school, in the context of the present research, has a special impact in students' lives. At this stage, students may focus primarily on developing social

networks and interpersonal relationships. This has two contradictory implications for reading literacy in secondary school. Students may get involved in developing their social lives rather than focusing on reading. However, this tendency to social life can be exploited in developing students reading literacy. Actually, this can be done by relating reading literacy to students' life and explaining how far it is a tool for living and learning rather than a subject matter which needs to be studied only for passing exams. More specifically, the motivation for reading literacy declines while the motivation for social life and interpersonal relationships rises. Thus, instruction needs to invest in raising interest in social life and interpersonal relationships while promoting reading motivation (Antonio & Guthrie, 2008). Once again, this reveals and stresses the essence of the reading literacy concept indicated earlier.

Research problem

In the Egyptian secondary school, the concern of the present research, reading is a subject matter which is mainly being taught for passing exams which are mainly concerned with assessing literal understanding and recalling factual information (Younis, 2005; Ministry of Education, 2002, 2006). The reality of curriculum of reading in secondary schools in Egypt does not reflect new trends in reading theory and practice and this inconsistency involves its targets, content, instruction, and assessment. For example, it is not concerned with developing fluency, or strategic reading, or motivation for reading as targets. Also, it is not using different types of texts as a reading content. Moreover, it employs teaching methods which encourage surface learning and memorization. Above all, it uses the assessment as a tool for grading and determining success. There is a need for planning and designing a new reading literacy curriculum by which the concept of reading literacy can be addressed and new trends in reading literacy theory and practice can be used for secondary school students. Thus, the present research intends to achieve the following aims.

Purpose of the research

The present research aims at:

1. Clarifying the context in which the present research is conducted focusing on the actual curriculum of reading for secondary school students in Egypt (15-17 year-old).

2. Analyzing new trends in reading theory and practice particularly in secondary school focusing on three broad elements: reading literacy theory; reading literacy targets and assessment; and reading literacy instruction and content.

3. Providing a rationale for designing a reading literacy curriculum for secondary students in Egypt through theoretical analysis (the designer's perspective) and fieldwork (the professionals' and practitioners' perspectives).

4. Developing a proposed reading literacy curriculum design (RLCD) in terms of its targets, content, instruction, and assessment.

5. Finding out to what extent this proposal would be accepted in practice.

Questions for the research

To achieve the research purposes, answers for the following questions were sought:

1. How might the curriculum of reading in secondary school in Egypt reflect new trends in reading theory and practice?

2. What might the proposed RLCD for secondary school students (14-17 year-old) in Egypt look like? The answer to this main question can be shaped through answering four sub-questions as follows

   - What should be taught (targets) in reading literacy curriculum for secondary school students in Egypt?

   - What types of texts (content) should be available through this curriculum?

   - How can reading literacy be taught (instruction) in secondary school in Egypt?

   - How can reading literacy be assessed (assessment)?

3. To what extent would the proposed reading literacy curriculum design be accepted in practice?

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Overview of the research

In seeking answers to the research questions and achieving the aims, methodology and ethics for the present research, two complementary components guide the researcher in designing and carrying out his research: theoretical analysis and fieldwork. In theoretical analysis, the researcher intends to clarify four issues: the context of the research; reading literacy theory; reading literacy targets and assessment; and reading literacy instruction and content. Through fieldwork/empirical work, the researcher intends to clarify the views of professionals (university staff responsible for curriculum and instruction) designing reading literacy curriculum for secondary school students through a semi-structured interview. In addition, there will be investigation of the practitioners' views i.e. school teachers and their supervisors (who inspect and advise teachers in Arabic language teaching) in secondary school through a questionnaire. Eventually, combining and negotiating the data from the theoretical analysis and the fieldwork results in outlining a proposed reading literacy curriculum design (RLCD). The figure below refers to the main components of the structure of the present research.

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                    ┌─────────────────┐
                    │  Methodology of │
                    │  the research   │
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│ The theoretical│  │Reading literacy│  │ The fieldwork │
│   analysis    │◄─►│  curriculum   │◄─►│               │
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│Context │ │Reading     │ │Reading     │ │Reading     │
│of the  │ │literacy    │ │literacy    │ │literacy    │
│research│ │theory      │ │targets and │ │instruction │
│        │ │            │ │assessment  │ │and content │
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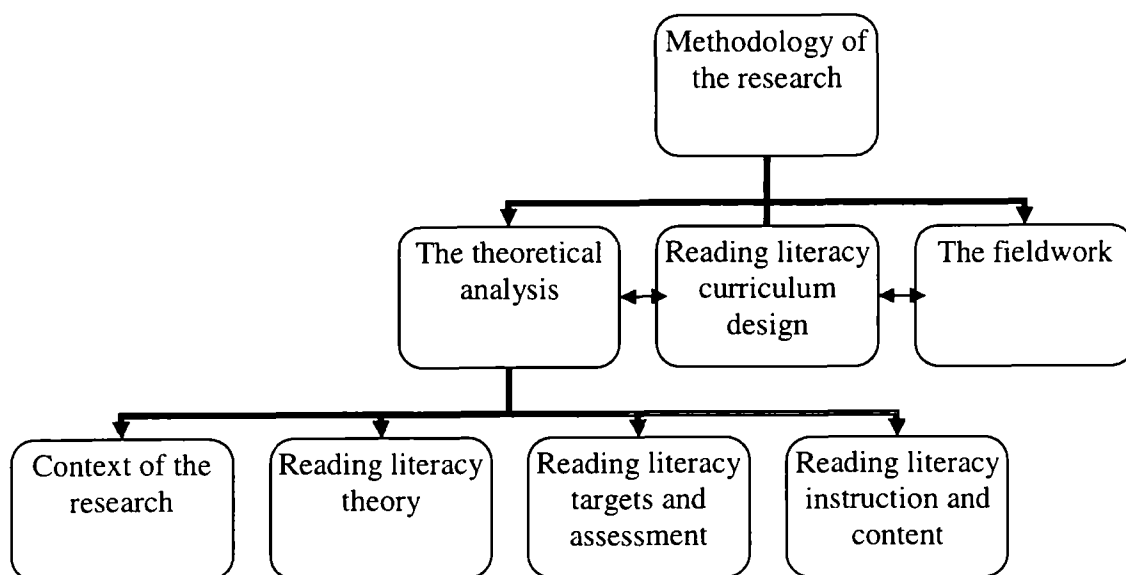
Figure 1: Overview of the research

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First of all, through chapter one, context of the research, the researcher intends to clarify relevant issues regarding the context, where the research is being conducted. This requires a synopsis about Egypt, the Arab Republic of Egypt, is required since the research is being conducted for secondary school students in Egypt. The same briefing is required about 'Arabic language' as the present research is concerned with reading literacy in the Arabic language as a mother tongue in Egypt, and refers to features of the Arabic language and its relationship to other languages such as English. Following that briefing, the researcher refers to the education system in Egypt and how it affects the language curriculum particularly the Arabic. As an extension to the same point, the researcher probes the culture of learning in this education system and how it affects the teaching and learning of reading in Arabic. Above all, a critical analysis of the reading situation within the Egyptian secondary school is needed to give a snapshot of the actual curriculum of reading in secondary school and what its position is viewed from new trends in reading theory and practice. This justifies the rationale for the present research. At the end of this chapter, a summary and implications of what has been discussed will be presented. It is worth mentioning that this chapter contributes to answering the first research question of how might the curriculum of reading in secondary school in Egypt reflect new trends in reading theory and practice?

To answer, theoretically, the second research question of what might the proposed RLCD for secondary school students (14-17 year-old) in Egypt look like, this can be shaped through theoretical analysis in the second, third, and fourth chapters. To achieve this, the second chapter, reading literacy theory, discusses the concept of reading literacy, different dimensions that shape this concept, and accordingly different models that represent different views of reading literacy process. The significance of this chapter lies in extracting critical and relevant implications of the concept, dimensions, and models of reading literacy for designing a reading literacy curriculum in the present research. This chapter provides a theoretical baseline that impacts upon and shapes the discussion in the third and fourth chapters.

Chapter three, on reading literacy targets and assessment, discusses, analyzes, and clarifies the first two components to reading literacy curriculum design (RLCD): targets and assessment. In mapping reading literacy targets, the researcher is concerned with five areas: reading for meaning and the role of schema theory in constructing the meaning process; reading literacy fluency; strategic reading literacy; reading literacy engagement; and meta-reading literacy. In addition, this chapter is concerned with framing a major component to RLCD: reading literacy assessment. Three critical broad issues will be discussed: a theoretical framework for reading literacy assessment; purposes for assessment; and how to conduct it.

Continuing with components to RLCD, chapter four, on reading literacy instruction and content, discusses and analyzes the other two components concerned in this research: instruction and content. With respect to the first issue, reading literacy instruction, four points will be investigated: approaches to reading literacy instruction; students' approaches to reading literacy; teachers' approaches to reading literacy; and strategies for reading literacy instruction for secondary students. The critical issue here is implications of approaches to learning and teaching for reading literacy instruction. In addition, this chapter discusses content/texts in terms of what counts as text; features of texts to be involved; choosing these texts; and most importantly, why these texts contribute to reading literacy.

The point to be made in this context is to what extent this proposed RLCD is applicable and acceptable in the Egyptian context. To answer this question, the researcher intends to use a semi-structured interview and a questionnaire to probe the professionals' views (specialists in curriculum and instruction in Egyptian universities) and the practitioners' views (Arabic language teachers and supervisors in secondary school in Egypt) respectively. This justifies the need for chapter five and chapter six.

Chapter five, on research methodology, discusses a framework for conducting the present research: its design, procedures, methods, data to be collected, and ethics. It discusses the research methods: the semi-structured interview and the questionnaire in

terms of their construction, justification, data they provide and piloting and assuring their quality. In addition, it explains procedures for conducting the empirical study or the fieldwork: describing population and choosing the sample, conducting the interview, and administering the questionnaire. Also, it refers to data analysis techniques to be used. Above all, it discusses ethics of the research within which the conduct of the present research is bounded and conducted accordingly.

Following this, chapter six, on data analysis, comes to present, discuss, and interpret data provided by the research methods: the semi-structured interview and the questionnaire. The crucial point to be made here is that this chapter contributes to the present research by answering the research question of "What might the proposed RLCD for secondary school students (14-17 year-old) in Egypt look like?" This question will be answered through theoretical analysis in earlier chapters and this time its answer comes from data provided by the semi-structured interview or the professionals' views and data derived from the questionnaire or the practitioners' views. The major contribution of this chapter is answering the research question of "To what extent would the proposed reading literacy curriculum design be accepted in practice?"

Thus, chapter seven, on reading literacy curriculum design (RLCD), comes to bridge what is revealed by theoretical analysis and data analysis and to develop RLCD through combining these two facets of the RLCD. This chapter is crucial to the present research since by it the main aim behind this research is achieved. In addition, this chapter defines RLCD in terms of its scope, framework, and components: targets, assessment, instruction, and content.

The chapter on the conclusions of the present research presents a brief summary of the main points. More importantly, it provides a summary of findings or the contribution of the present research to the theory and practice of education in Egypt. In addition, some recommendations and suggestions for further research will be introduced. This chapter refers to what the present research contributes to theoretical and empirical knowledge and explains the significance of the research.

Rationale for the research

It can be argued that the present research has been motivated by a desire to make a contribution to the general field of knowledge regarding reading literacy curriculum design. In the meantime, it is, initially, meant to contribute to improving reading literacy curriculum design for secondary school students in the Egyptian context. In this sense, the present research is significant for and is intended to help the following interested parties: curriculum designers, secondary school students, policy makers, secondary school teachers and supervisors, and reading literacy itself, by combining professionals' and practitioners' views on the one hand, and the theory on the other.

The present research bridges a gap in the Egyptian context since there is no a research, according to the researcher's knowledge, which has been conducted to fill this gap. This gap is stressed clearly by Younis (2005: 309-311) who states that "comparing what actually takes place in Egypt to what reading experts stated, one can notice that teaching of reading for secondary education in Egypt needs reconsideration (…) there is a dire need for a proposal of a reading curriculum in the secondary education in Egypt".

Eventually and as stated above, the essence of the reading literacy concept lies in empowering students with understanding, learning, enjoyment, and more importantly living and improving their lives. In this sense, the present research is meant to achieve this concept by providing a design that portrays the reading literacy curriculum in terms of its targets, assessment, instruction, and content. It provides a baseline data that can be investigated by curriculum developers in improving reading literacy for secondary school students in Egypt. Also, it can be used by policy makers in the Ministry of Education to improve reading literacy practices in secondary school in Egypt.

In the same direction, the reading literacy advocated in the present research is meant to enable and improve secondary students ability to construct meaning from a text, to read with more fluency, to improve their strategic reading, and monitor and self-regulate their reading, and more importantly to raise their motivation to reading literacy by considering their attitudes and interests in reading.

In addition, it can be argued that the present research provides a proposal which contributes to secondary school targets. In other words, the secondary school plays a critical role in preparing students either to prepare for their education in higher institutes or to join the market place to work. This is the notion behind 'reading literacy' concept. As the proposed design of reading literacy emphasises the fact that reading literacy is a tool for living and improving students' social participation in their communities. Thus, through different components to the reading literacy curriculum design, the researcher stresses the importance of relating reading literacy to students' lives and how students benefit from their reading in reality.

Furthermore, the present research holds a contextual significance. In other words, theoretical ideas/design discussed and presented by the researcher will be tested for applicability and acceptability by the practitioners i.e. secondary school language teachers and supervisors. It is hoped that if those practitioners view positively the proposed reading literacy curriculum arising from this research, then they may in future help in achieving targets of this design especially in terms of instruction and supervision. Also, this theoretical design has been supported by the university where the researcher is based in Egypt and other professionals in the wider academic community in Egypt. The present research provides a design based on analysing and combining data provided by theoretical analysis, practitioners' and professionals' views. In this sense, although it contributes to the general field of reading literacy curriculum design, it is meant to fit the Egyptian context, the concern of the present research.

Parameters of the research

It can be stated that the present research is confined to the reading literacy curriculum design for secondary school students in Egypt. This RLCD is restricted to four components: targets, assessment, instruction, and content. Also, it is constrained to theoretical analysis (the researcher's beliefs based on analysis of the existing research literature), the Egyptian professionals' views (the semi-structured interview) i.e. nine university staff specialized in curriculum and instruction (Arabic language), and the

practitioners' views (the questionnaire) i.e. secondary school Arabic language teachers and supervisors in one Egyptian education district (Ismailia district). In addition, it is confined to providing a framework or guidelines for RLCD components. Above all, it is concerned with reading literacy in Arabic language as a mother tongue.

CHAPTER ONE: CONTEXT OF THE RESEARCH

1.0 Introduction

This chapter provides a brief background about the state of Egypt, the Arabic language since this research is concerned with designing a reading literacy curriculum in the Arabic language as mother tongue, the education system in Egypt, Egyptian culture of learning and its effects on teaching and learning of language particularly reading, and finally, a critical analysis of the reading situation in Egyptian secondary schools. This chapter aims at clarifying the context of the present research, and probing factors that affect teaching and learning of language in the Egyptian context which in turn, helps in understanding the reading situation in the Egyptian secondary schools, where this research is being conducted.

1.1 Egypt, the Arab Republic of Egypt (ARE)

Egypt is known as 'the motherland of the world' as it is one of the earliest ancient known and flourishing civilizations before more than five thousands years ago. It can be argued that it witnessed the following eras: Pharaonic era (3000 B.C); Greek-Roman era; and finally, Arabic and Islamic (639 C.E.) era successively. It is situated in the north of Africa at the juncture of Africa and Asia continents, and it is bordered on the north by Mediterranean Sea, on the south by Sudan, on the east by Red Sea and Palestine, and on the west by Libya.

Egypt is one of the most populous countries in the world and its population is about 78,800,000 according to 2006 census, most of whom live in 4% percent of its total land area (1,001,450 square kilometers) on the Nile river banks, and about 96% percent of Egypt's total land area is sparsely populated. You can divide Egyptians according to where they live as urban, rural, coastal, and Bedouin people. As much as 95% of the people are Sunni Muslims and about 5% are Christians and others. Arabic is the official language and many educated Egyptians also speak English and French (Wikipedia, http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Egypt, May 29th, 2006).

Egypt is classified as a developing country that has limited resources and a rapid increase in its population. As a consequence, and according to the Human Development Reports (2001) Egypt faces many socio-economic challenges such as about 23% percent of Egyptians below the poverty line, and about 45% of adult Egyptians are illiterate (UNDP, http://www.undp.org.eg/profile/egypt.htm, January 25th, 2009). As a result of this the Egyptian education system faces many challenges that will be discussed later in this chapter.

Modern Egypt (1760 C.E.), that mainly was established by Mohamed Ali Pasha (1805-48 C.E.) as part of the Ottoman empire, was invaded by France (1798-1801 C.E.), and Britain (1882 C.E.). Egypt obtained its complete independence from Ottoman Empire (king Farouk) and Britain after (1952 C.E.) revolution and the republic was declared and it is known today, officially, as the Arab Republic of Egypt. Cairo is the capital and largest city. Egypt is widely regarded as the main political and cultural centre of the Arab and Middle Eastern region. Egypt has a rich culture as a result of interaction with different cultures of the preceding eras that Egypt was witnessing and so, the Egyptians are open-minded and flexible people and in the meantime they have their own distinct culture and identity (FRDLC, http://countrystudies.us/egypt/71.htm, June 1st, 2006; UNDP, http://www.undp.org.eg/profile/egypt.htm, January 25th, 2009; Wikipedia, http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Egypt, May 29th, 2006).

In this context, the current research comes since it is intended to apply or benefit from what is revealed by reading literacy theory and practice in the Western context to the Egyptian context which is viewed as a different context. The Egyptian context can be opened to and interact with the Western context to enrich the former experience about teaching and learning of language particularly in reading, the concern of the present research, since the latter has a good and long experience in this field. Since this research is concerned with reading literacy in Arabic language as mother tongue, the following section provides a brief introduction to Arabic language.

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1.2 Arabic language

Arabic language (العربية اللغة or *al-luġah_al-'arabiyyah as transliterated)* is the largest member of Semitic branch of the Afro-Asiatic language family, the Semitic name is derived from Shem son of Noah, and it is spoken as a native language throughout of the Arab world. Arabic language has been a literary language since at least the 6th century, and is the liturgical language of Islam and the Qur'an, the holy book of Islam, is revealed in Arabic language. Because of this, it is widely studied and known throughout the Islamic world (Wikipedia, http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Arabic_Language, June 10th, 2006; Younis, 2004: 13).

As a consequence, Arabic language is used to write many different language with some modifications, even those belonging to language family other than Semitic such as: Urdu, Malay, and Persian as the case in Iran, Tajikistan, Afghanistan, Uzbekistan, and Azerbaijan i.e. these language are being written using Arabic script. In addition, a few

> *words of Arabic origin have entered the English language and many European languages. One of the primary routes that they have entered other language is via the Spanish language, heavily influenced by the Arabic of Al-Andulas (Wikipedia, http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Arabic_Language, June 10th, 2006).*

Among these English words that are ultimately derived from Arabic, every-day vocabulary like "sugar" (sukkar), "cotton" (*quṭūn*) or more recognizable are words like "algebra", and "alcohol" (ibid, http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Arabic_Language, June 10th, 2006).

However, the Arabic language has its own unique script that is composed of 28 basic letters and is written from right to left, the writing is unicase i.e. the concept of upper and lower case letters does not exist, and the letters are attached to one another and they take different appearances as a function of their connection to preceding or following letters. Arabic alphabet is an impure one as it has short three vowels or 'diacritic marks' that often are not written, though three long ones are written. In addition, there is a diacritic mark (sukūn) used as an indication of short vowels omission and another one

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called 'šadda' used to as an indication of the lengthening of consonants (double same consonants in one letter) (Wikipedia, http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Arabic_alphabet, May 29th, 2006). Some of its letters are companied by dots: one, two, or three that put on the top or the bottom of a certain letter to distinguish between the letters that take the same form e.g. ب *bā' /b/*, ت *tā' /t/*, ث *ṯā' /θ/* (See Appendix A).

> *Notwithstanding the seminal importance of language, Arabic today, on the threshold of a new knowledge society, faces severe challenges and a real crisis in terms of theorization, teaching, grammar, lexicography, usage, documentation, creation, and criticism. The rise of information technology presents another aspect of the challenges to the Arabic language today (UNDP, 2003: 122).*

In this context, the present research is concerned with one of these challenges that is teaching and learning of Arabic language as the researcher intends to design a reading literacy curriculum for secondary school students in Egypt. The features of teaching and learning challenge will be discussed through the rest of this chapter.

Still, an important point that deserves to be mentioned that is "the situation of the Arabic language is further complicated by the duality of standard and colloquial Arabic" (UNDP, 2003: 123). With this regard, standard Arabic, referred to as 'fusha', is not the same as the language of daily speech.

> *This language [standard Arabic] is no longer the language of conversation. It is rather the language of reading and writing and their official manifestations (religious sermons and political, administrative or social addresses). Moreover, it is the language of the educated and the intelligentsia, often used to display their knowledge in lectures. In other words, classical Arabic [standard Arabic] is not the language of cordial, spontaneous expression, emotions, feelings and everyday communication (ibid: 125)*

Furthermore, Maamouri (1998) points out that

fusha is nobody's mother tongue and is rarely or almost never used at home in the Arab world. It is only learned through schooling and used exclusively at outside official and formal functions. The native dialect or vernacular variety of Arabic is typically acquired as a mother tongue and continues to be used almost exclusively in speech throughout the adulthood and life (…) The fusha and the sum of all the colloquials in use in the Arabic region represent the 'Arabic continuum' known under the ambiguous term commonly referred to as the Arabic language (pp. 34-35).

In other words, in Arabic speaking-countries, the standard and colloquial Arabic

divide among themselves the domains of speaking and writing: the standard language is used for written speech and for formal spoken speech, whereas the colloquial language [referred to as al-'āmmiyyya] is used for informal speech. The colloquial language is everybody's mother tongue; people only learn standard when they go to school (Versteegh, 2001: 189).

Two points to be made are that written texts are revealed in the Modern Standard Arabic Language (MSAL) and although there are differences between MSAL and colloquial Arabic (CA) they are much related. In linguistics, William Marcais (1930) called this linguistic situation 'diglossia'. This term 'diglossia' was refined later by Charles Ferguson (1959) who points out that 'diglossia' is a linguistic situation where, in a given society, there are two (often) closely-related languages, one of high prestige (H), which is generally used by the government and in formal texts, and one of low prestige (L), which is usually the spoken vernacular tongue. The high-prestige language tends to be the more formalised, and its forms and vocabulary often 'filter down' into the vernacular, though often in a changed form (Maamouri. 1998: 34-35; Versteegh, 2001: 189-190).

This diglossia "represents the separate adaptations of related speech communities to their different sociocultural environments" (Maamouri, 1998: 31). Eventually, there are some differences between the MSAL and CA. This draws attention to an important point that is the differences between the written and the spoken language and their impact on teaching and learning of language particularly reading in schools. The question here is:

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what is the impact of differences between standard/written language and colloquial/spoken language on teaching and learning of Arabic language particularly reading for secondary students in Egypt? The argument is those secondary students (14-17 year- old), the concern of the present research, are capable of releasing differences between CA or spoken and written texts or MSAL. The point to be made is that the difference between CA and MSAL has very little impact on secondary students in question. In addition, all texts should be revealed in MSAL, the written language.

Moreover, Arabic is the national and official language and the medium of instruction in Egypt, and hence the education policy pays special attention to the Arabic. Thus, the Arabic language is being taught as an important 'subject matter' throughout all the pre-university education stages, especially at the primary stage since children can not continue their learning without mastering its basic skills. This point leads to shedding light on the education system in Egypt in addition, the Egyptian culture of learning as the researcher intends to discuss the features of both of them and their effects on teaching and learning of the ASL particularly reading in the secondary school.

1.3 The education system in Egypt

As this research is not concerned with a historical perspective, so it is useful to give just a brief background about the education system especially throughout the Arabic and Islamic era that began in 641 C.E until now since this helps in understanding the nature of the present education system and how it affects teaching and learning of ASL, the medium of instruction.

In this vein, there are three crucial main distinctive stages, according to researcher's view, in the Egyptian education system that colored and shaped ways of teaching and learning in this system. First of all, as a result of the introduction into Egypt of Arabic and Islam in 641 C.E., a simple system was envisioned to teach children to read and write Arabic, to do simple arithmetic, and mainly to memorize the Qur'an, the holy book of Islam (FRDLC, http://countrystudies.us/egypt/71.htm, June 1st, 2006). This system is named 'Kuttab' and it consists of basic schools, in fact classes, where teacher 'Imam or Sheikh', who leads people in the mosque, sits at the front of children who sit in a semi-

circle shape to their teacher. Children who do well in these basic schools/classes can join 'Al-Azhar Mosque/University' (founded in 975 C. E.), an Islamic academic establishment and the most celebrated university in the Muslim world and the oldest university in the world to teach religious and scientific subjects as the study sessions include

> *Qur'anic readings, recitation and exegesis, jurisprudence, Hadith (the Prophet's tradition), philology (linguistics), philosophy, mathematics, and astronomy (...) Napoleon Bonaparte (1769-1821) considered Al-Azhar as the most renowned in the Muslim world and wrote in his banishment diaries: "Al-Azhar is equated to the Sorbonne University (Ministry of Higher Education, 2002: 100).*

Secondly, the education system witnessed many crucial changes in Modern Egypt (1760-1952 C. E.), especially the great role of Mohamed Ali Pasha (1805-1848 C. E.), who has been called the 'father of modern Egypt'. He was an ambitious leader and he realized that to build a great empire you should begin with education and this is what he did as he built many schools and paid special attention to Al-Azhar Mosque/University and sent students to study in Europe (Ministry of Higher Education, 2002: 100).

> *Muhammad Ali established the system of modern secular education in the early nineteenth century to provide technically trained cadres for his civil administration and military. His grandson, Ismail, greatly expanded the system by creating a network of public schools at the primary, secondary, and higher levels. Ismail's wife set up the first school for girls in 1873 (FRDLC, http://countrystudies.us/egypt/71.htm, June 1st, 2006).*

Although, there were many schools and universities built and there were numerous efforts to make primary schools available for all Egyptians, still education was only available to elite, who could pay until the 1952 revolution.

Finally, and after the revolution (1952 C. E.), the Egyptian governments pledged to provide free education for all children, and as a result, they paid special attention to the budget of the ministry of education, and building schools and universities. They abolished all fees for public schools and universities, and they made the basic stage in education system (6-14 Year-Old) compulsory for all children by law (1981). According to the governmental census (2007/2008), there are about 42,184 schools with some 15,778,337 children (Ministry of Education, http://services.moe.gov.eg/, June 19th, 2008), and 18 public universities with more than 1,599,837 students and the majority of students attend public institutions. In addition, there are many private schools and universities that vary in their levels and tuition fees they take but they are supervised by the Ministry of Education (Said, 2005; Supreme Council of Universities, http://www.scu.eun.eg/Arabic/uni.htm, June 25th, 2008).

It can be argued that the Egyptian school education system is highly centralized and supervised by the state that imposes the same education policy around all Egypt (Wikipedia, http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Eucation_in_egypt, June 1st, 2006). The figure below shows the hierarchal structure of the education system in Egypt. The census of students is mainly derived from the official census of Ministry of Education (Ministry of Education, http://services.moe.gov.eg/, June 19th, 2008; Said, 2005).

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                    ┌─────────────────────────────────────┐
                    │ Higher Education (18-22+ year-old)  │
                    │      About 1,599,837 students        │
                    └─────────────────────────────────────┘

┌──────────────┐  ┌──────────────┐  ┌──────────────┐  ┌──────────────┐
│ 5% percent of│  │  Technical   │  │   General    │  │ All qualified│
│  graduates   │  │  Secondary   │  │  Secondary   │  │ students join│
│  allowed to  │  │Education (15-│  │Education (15-│  │  and choose  │
│  join and    │  │ 17 or 15- 19 │  │ 17 year-old) │  │ an institute │
│ choose higher│  │  year-old)   │  │    About     │  │    or a      │
│  education   │  │    About     │  │781,985 (36.5)│  │  university  │
│ depending on │  │  1,361,629   │  │   student    │  │  depending   │
│ their scores │  │(63.5) students│  │             │  │   on their   │
│ and the rest │  │              │  │              │  │    scores    │
│   can work   │  │              │  │              │  │              │
└──────────────┘  └──────────────┘  └──────────────┘  └──────────────┘
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          ┌─────────────────────────────────────────┐
          │ All qualified students transferred and   │
          │  distributed depending on their scores   │
          └─────────────────────────────────────────┘

        ┌─────────────────────────────────────────┐
        │ Elementary Education (12-14 year-old)    │
        │      About 3,781,251 students            │        ┌──────────────┐
        └─────────────────────────────────────────┘        │  Basic and   │
                                                            │  Compulsory  │
        ┌─────────────────────────────────────────┐        │Education (6-14│
        │ Primary Education (6-11  year-old)       │        │  year-old)   │
        │      9,051,032 students                  │        └──────────────┘
        └─────────────────────────────────────────┘

        ┌─────────────────────────────────────────┐
        │ Pre-school Education (4-5 year-old)      │
        │      About 678,389 students              │
        └─────────────────────────────────────────┘
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Figure 1.1: The education system stages in Egypt

For more clarity, the table below indicates the actual number of schools, classrooms, and
pupils in the pre-university education in Egypt according to the Ministry of Education
census (2007/2008) (Ministry of Education, http://services.moe.gov.eg/, June 19th,
2008).

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Table 1.1: The total number of stages, schools, classrooms, and pupils in the public and private pre-university education in Egypt

No.	Stages	No. of Schools	No. of Classrooms	No. of Pupils
1	Kindergartens/pre-school stage (4-5 year-old)	7378	21,233	678,389
2	Primary school/stage (6-11 year- old)	16,720	209,340	9,051,032
3	Elementary school/stage (12-14 year- old)	9440	93,189	3,781,251
4	Secondary school/stage (15-17 year- old) or (15-19 year- old) in some technical schools)	General - 2284	23,956	781,985 (36.5)
		Technical - 1792	39,258	1,361,629 (63.5)
		4076	63214	2,143,614 (100.0)
5	One class schools	3742	3742	84,438
6	Special education schools	828	3998	36,945
7	Total number	42,184	394,716	15,778,337

The pre-school education/kindergarten stage (4-5 year-old) is not compulsory, but the current education policy intends to generalize it gradually for all the Egyptians public schools. The basic education, the primary stage (6-11 year-old), and the elementary stage (12-14 year-old), is compulsory by law (1981), and children should transfer directly from the primary to the elementary stage after passing the final exam. However, students transfer from the elementary and are distributed to the secondary schools according to their scores. However, the general schools (about 36.5 of students

according to 2007/2008 census) are more prestigious since all qualified graduates join higher education whereas, the technical schools (about 63.5 of students according to 2007/2008 census) qualify graduates to join marketplace or 5% percent of them can choose and join higher education depending on scores they have achieved in the final exam.

From another perspective, the public/state education has two types of schools: the 'Arabic Schools' that reveal the national curriculum in Arabic language and they are free as their fees are abolished and they absorb most of the students since this kind of schools involves about 36,246 school (85.9 of the total number of schools) with some of 14,253,806 student (about 90.3 of the total number of students); and the 'Experimental Language Schools' (ELS) that provide most of the national curriculum in English language and students must pay tuition fees. ELS include about 1097 school (2.6 of the total number of schools) with some of 283,841 students (1.8 of the total number of students). Alongside public schools, private schools involve about 4841 school (11.5 of the total number of schools) with some of 1,240,690 students (7.9. of the total number of students). It is worth mentioning that, all types of schools are supervised by the ministry of education (Ministry of Education, http://services.moe.gov.eg/, June 19th, 2008; Wikipedia, http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Education_in_Egypt, June 1st, 2006). However, all types teach the same curriculum of reading, the concern of the current research.

Finally, the higher education (18-22+ year-old) includes two kinds: 18 public universities and more than 50 public non-university institutes, most of them are 2 year Middle Technical Institutes and some are 4 or 5 year Higher Technical Institutes. In addition, there are some private universities and institutes but, the majority of students attend public universities and institutes (Ministry of Higher Education, 2002; Said, 2005; Supreme Council of Universities, http://www.scu.eun.eg/Arabic/uni.htm, June 25th, 2008).

The question now is: what is the position of the present research in the Egyptian education system? In other words, in which stage is the present research being

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conducted? And why? The current research is being carried out in general secondary schools and is being concerned with the curriculum of reading and the reasons behind that are:

1. Today, the secondary education is the most crucial stage as students' capabilities are most manifest here and this stage plays an important role in preparing students either for higher education study or work and facing the burdens of life (Younis, 2005: 311). This type of school prepares students to join and continue their learning in higher education which puts additional responsibilities, on the secondary school reading literacy curriculum to help this school to achieve its goals.

2. In addition, the actual secondary curriculum of reading in Egypt is very similar to or repetitious to the elementary curriculum of reading (Te'eima, 1998: 91). Thus, developing a more advanced reading literacy curriculum for secondary school students is required.

3. Above all, secondary students are more interested in developing their social networks and interpersonal relationships (Antonio & Guthrie, 2008).

1.4 The Egyptian culture of learning

After shedding light on the organizational structure of schools in the Egyptian education system, this section is concerned with clarifying the context in which the teaching and learning process is being tackled. In other words, what is the culture of learning that dominates and affects such a process? And what are the implications of that for the current research? First of all, the term of 'culture of learning' means, according to Cortazzi and Jin (1996), people's

expectations, attitudes, values, and beliefs about what constitutes good learning, about how to teach or learn, whether and how to ask questions, what textbooks are for, and how language teaching relates to broader issues of the nature and purpose of education (p. 169).

People are different in their expectations of what makes good teaching and learning e.g. some may adopt deep learning, thinking, and individualism as a culture of learning and in contrast, some may consider rote learning, obeying and respecting teachers' views, and collectivism (e.g. teaching all students with the same techniques) as a good way for teaching and learning (ibid.1996).

Furthermore, developing a full account of culture of learning requires a consideration of students, teachers, curriculum designers, decision makers, setters of exams, and material writers and how those people think about what makes good teaching and learning (Cortazzi & Jin, 1996: 198-199). However, teachers and students may adopt a certain kind of culture of learning or a certain view of good teaching and learning that is fuelled by the education policy and curriculum designers or socio-economic and political factors. In other words, teachers and students may adopt a way of teaching or learning that achieves their purposes in a certain context, not what they think is good or right. Actually, this is the situation in the Egyptian case. Although, teachers and students are advised to develop deep learning, understanding, dialogue, discussion, and thinking, the most salient features of the Egyptian culture of learning are: the surface learning, memorization, and rote learning. The question here is: why is such a culture of learning is dominant? This will be discussed in the following section.

Here the researcher intends to clarify how might the Egyptian culture of learning look. The factors which might have shaped such a culture of learning are explored. Finally possible influences of that culture of learning on teaching and learning particularly teaching and learning of language are considered. In this vein, the researcher intends to discuss the term of culture of learning in its relation to the Egyptian education system and some socio-economic and political factors of the Egyptian context. Since

> *any particular culture of learning will have its roots in educational and more broadly, cultural traditions of the community or society in which it is located (...) A culture of learning is also likely to be influenced by the socio-economic conditions of that society (Cortazzi & Jin, 1996: 169).*

First of all, the education policy concentrates on quantity not quality of education in Egypt. In this vein, UNDP (2003: 52) points out that

> *the most serious problem facing Arab education is its deteriorating quality (...) Affect educational quality, chief among which are education policies, teachers' and educators' working conditions, curricula and educational methodologies (p. 52).*

The researcher intends to explain this point of view in detail as follows:

1. The Egyptian education system, as stated earlier, is highly centralized system, that means the ministry of education imposes the same education policy around Egypt, although students have different interests. The issue here is: some students are forced to memorize information stated in the textbooks that are irrelevant to their interests only to pass exams. This issue, according to Ausubel (1963) encourages rote learning and diminishes meaningful learning, and according to Marton and Säljö (1976) encourages surface learning and devalues deep learning. Also, this policy does not account for individualism or differences among students.

2. The Egyptian primary education can not absorb all children at the age of school entry (6 year-old). In this case, it is concerned with the quantity not quality of education since the Egyptian government is concerned, initially, with building schools and providing basic facilities in order to cover all Egypt and absorb all children at school age. As a result of this, some of the Egyptian schools have two shifts on the same day to reduce the density of the classes (Ministry of Education, http://services.moe.gov.eg/, June 19th, 2008).

3. There are some factors in Arab countries that adversely affect teachers' abilities and capabilities to "interact with, motivate, and encourage students to innovate and think critically and creatively" (UNDP, 2003: 53), chief among these factors are:

low salaries; (...) a lack of facilities; poorly designed curricula; and indifferent quality of teacher training. Most present-day educators have graduated from institutions that follow an approach to teaching based on rote learning, which is not especially conducive to critical thinking (ibid: 53).

Furthermore,

Educated Egyptians had perceived teaching as a career that lacked prestige. Young people chose this career only when there was no other option or when it would serve as a stepping-stone to a more lucrative career in law (FRDLC, http://countrystudies.us/egypt/71.htm, June 1st, 2006).

As a consequence, teachers do not pay great attention to their teaching and care for their students as they devote their energy and time to finding additional jobs or to working as 'private tutors'. In other words, they, in most Egyptian cases, think only about the money, and they accept teaching just as a gateway to being 'private tutors' where they can earn more money.

4. When broadly considering curricula in Arab countries, some researchers like Bashuor (2003) argue that

the curricula taught in Arab countries seem to encourage submission, obedience, subordination and compliance, rather than free critical thinking. In many cases, the contents of these curricula do not stimulate students to criticise political or social axioms. Instead, they smother their independent tendencies and creativity (UNDP, 2003: 53).

The foregoing quotation implies that curricula of reading in the Egyptian schools are poorly designed and emphasize memorization, rote learning, and surface learning and on the other hand, diminish understanding, meaningful learning and deep learning. Teachers adopt teacher-centered approaches to convey sets of indisputable knowledge stated in the curricula to passive learners and even assessment encourages recalling explicit information stated in the contents of such curricula. This criticism is stressed by Younis (2005) and UNDP (2003) in its report about Arab countries.

> *In Arab countries (...) lectures seem to dominate. Students can do little but memorize, recite and perfect rote learning (...) Communication in education is didactic, supported by set books containing indisputable texts (...) and by examination process that only tests memorization and factual recall (UNDP, 2003: 54).*

5. When particularly considering curricula and methodologies of Arabic language teaching in the Arab countries, which is revealed is that the actual curricula of the Arabic language seem to support surface learning, memorization, and rote learning as well.

> *The teaching of Arabic also suffers from an acute crisis, both in curricula and methodology. The most apparent symptoms of that crisis include: concentration on the superficial aspects of teaching grammar and morphology rather than on the core concepts of texts and their respective holistic structures: inattention to semantics and meaning (...) the prevailing methodology that the Arabic school follows in teaching the language still emphasizes memorization rather than the acquisition of dynamic, renewable knowledge (UNDP, 2003: 125).*

In the same vein, Ashor and Abdelfatah (2006) point out that Egyptian education faces a real crisis and the most salient feature of this crisis is: it is didactic one, in the sense that

it does not encourage students to interact, participate, or think critically, and it supports a teacher-centered approach and this because of the nature of its repetitive curricula which are designed to provide students with some information through teachers without emphasizing involvement of those students in dialogue or thinking. Thus, there is a severe need for reconsideration of such curricula and teacher training in Egypt and above all, as the education process, in Egypt, is devoted to train students to pass exams and passing exams does not mean students have acquired knowledge in any long term sense.

From the foregoing discussion about the Egyptian culture of learning, it is apparent that the current education policy, curricula, instruction, and assessment seem to encourage the 'culture of memory' (Abu Bakr, 2004), which is concerned with availability/quantity, collectivism, memorization, rote learning, or surface learning. The outcome of such a culture are graduates who have the same competences and give students the same 'model' or what is named by this researcher now as 'model graduates'. In contrast, the education policy, curricula, instruction, and assessment should consider developing a 'culture of creativity' (ibid, 2004) which is concerned with quality, individualism, understanding/thinking, meaningful learning, or deep learning. The outcome of this would be graduates who are 'relative' in their thinking, understanding, or competences. The following figure sums up the above discussion.

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┌─────────────────────────┐         ┌─────────────────────────┐
│      'What is'           │         │ 'What ought to be' the  │
│ the current policy,      │         │ education policy,       │
│ curricula,              │         │ curricula,             │
│ methodologies, and      │         │ methodologies and       │
│ assessment support:     │         │ assessment should:      │
└─────────────────────────┘         └─────────────────────────┘
            │            ╲        ╱            │
            │             ╲      ╱             │
            ▼              ▼    ▼              ▼
┌─────────────────────┐  ┌────────────┐  ┌─────────────────────┐
│ - Availability/     │  │  The gap   │  │ - Quality           │
│   quantity          │  │  and the   │  │ - Individualism     │
│ - Collectivism      │→ │  position  │← │ - Understanding     │
│ - Memorization      │  │  of the    │  │ - Meaningful        │
│ - Rote learning     │  │  present   │  │   learning          │
│ - Surface learning. │  │  research  │  │ - Deep learning.    │
└─────────────────────┘  └────────────┘  └─────────────────────┘
            │             ▲    ▲             │
            │            ╱      ╲            │
            ▼           ╱        ╲           ▼
┌─────────────────────┐            ┌─────────────────────┐
│ Model graduates who │            │ Relative graduates  │
│ adopt the culture   │            │ who adapt the       │
│ of memory           │            │ culture of          │
│                     │            │ creativity          │
└─────────────────────┘            └─────────────────────┘
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Figure 1.2: The gap between 'what is' and 'what ought to be' in the Egyptian culture of learning.

The question here is: is it possible to change a culture of learning? And how? Without a doubt, it is possible to change a culture of learning if the factors that shape and fuel this culture are changed. Of course, this change occurs slowly but it is still possible (Cortazzi & Jin, 1996: 181). In this context, the present research comes to bridge the gap between the culture of memory and the culture of creativity through designing a reading literacy curriculum which would encourage the culture of creativity, and develop meaningful learning, deep learning, understanding, and pay special attention to students' interests. Also, it would devalue the dominant culture of memory and diminish rote learning, surface learning, memorization, and collectivism.

It can be argued that memorization of some information to be recalled or used later is needed e.g. recall in exams or recall and reciting some poems from a literary heritage but, this information should be understood not memorized by heart. The culture of creativity may involve memorization at some point but this should be combined with understanding. This means that advocating and adapting the culture of creativity does not diminish the culture of memory at all but, pays attention to combining memorization, if needed, with understanding and thinking of why memorize and how to use or benefit from it (Abu-Bakr, 2004). The issue here is: what does this shift mean for reading literacy for the secondary school? Through carrying out the present research, the researcher intends to convince key people e.g. policy makers or curriculum developers through presenting an outline design for a reading literacy curriculum which is supposed to encourage deep learning and higher order thinking. This can be seen as a step for stepping- stone towards changing the dominant culture of learning in secondary education in Egypt.

1.5 A critical analysis of the reading curriculum in secondary schools

In connection with the context of the current research, this section continues to provide a background and critical analysis of the reading curriculum within the education system in Egypt and to clarify the tensions, dilemmas, weaknesses, and shortcomings in such a curriculum. The aim is to identify the problem of the present research; and to provide the rationale for change, the rationale for carrying out this research. This section hopes to contribute to answering the first research question of "How might the curriculum of reading in secondary school in Egypt reflect new trends in reading literacy theory and practice?"

Broadly speaking, Arabic, as stated earlier, is the medium of instruction for Egyptian education system. In other words, students should master on its skills as a means of learning in and out of schools and eventually, if students have a lack of competence of Arabic especially reading they will struggle in their learning in and out of schools. In addition, the Egyptian national curriculum is a subject-centered one that depends on a set of separated 'subjects'. Arabic is one of these 'subjects' which is presented as

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separate branches both in the elementary and the secondary schools that include: grammar, reading, literature, eloquence, oral expression, written expression, dedication, and handwriting, however, there is a sort of integration among these branches in the primary stage.

Moreover, the teaching of Arabic as a 'subject' takes 53% percent of the total time for teaching in the primary schools, 26% percent of the total time for teaching in the elementary stage, and 18% percent of the total time in the secondary stage. Reading is an important language skill, hence, all education stages are concerned with teaching of reading and devote more effort and pay special attention to develop students' reading skills. The kindergarten stage mainly aims at developing reading readiness, and teaching of reading takes 80% percent of the total time for teaching Arabic as 'subject' in the primary stage, 33% percent of the total time for teaching Arabic in the elementary stage, and 33% percent of the total time for teaching Arabic in the secondary stage (Younis, 2005:301).

It is apparent that the Egyptian education policy pays a special attention to the teaching of Arabic, and particularly reading for all the pre-university education stages. The issue here is: what kind of teaching of reading is dominant? In other words, is this attention paid for quantity or quality in teaching? Is this attention paid to provide just more time or a separate textbook for teaching reading or on the other hand, to provide suitable and effective targets, materials, instruction, and assessment techniques which reflect new and robust trends in the reading literacy theory and practice? The answer to this question will be drawn out through the rest of this section. Generally speaking,

> the concept of reading has two main stages in Egypt. First of all, reading was viewed as a decoding and articulation skill, hence more attention was paid for oral reading in education system, and this attitude was dominant before 1950s. Secondly, reading was viewed, in addition to decoding and articulation, as comprehension process and this attitude appeared after 1950s as a result of

efforts of many researchers who studied abroad in America and Europe (Younis, 2005: 301).

However, the education policy in the Egyptian schools still encourages and supports the former concept which is concerned with decoding and articulation skills in teaching and learning of reading especially in the primary education. In spite of the fact that the elementary and the secondary schools pay some attention to understanding and critical reading, they are not concerned with important reading literacy targets such as, making connections between what students read and what they already know, and using acquired information from what they read in solving problems and in real new situations (Khater & Rasslan, 2000: 71).

Furthermore and broadly speaking, many researchers, e.g. (Harris & Sipay, 1980; Younis, 2005; Rasslan, 2005; Smith, 2005), point out that teaching and learning of the reading process has five stages, these are: 'reading readiness' which includes pre-school stage/kindergarten; 'beginning reading' that occupies mainly the first grade; 'rapid development of reading skills' that includes mainly the second and the third grades and is concerned with decoding and understanding; 'wide reading' that involves fourth, fifth, and sixth grades where, in addition to developmental reading, the major attention is paid to functional and recreational reading; and 'refinement reading', which takes place through high school and college as students needs to develop their reading in both amount and difficulty and to use reading as a means for living and life-long learning. The question now is: what is the position of the teaching and learning of reading in the Egyptian secondary schools?

From a different perspective, the teaching and learning of reading can be broadly categorized under two headings: learning to read which involves the previous five stages that are supposed to be developed throughout the basic education in Egypt (6-14 year-old). Then, students begin a different stage: reading to learn in which the secondary education promotes reading as a means for studying, recreation, life-long learning, or living. However, 'learning to read' is the concern of the Egyptian secondary schools not

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'reading to learn' (Younis, 2005: 309-310). In fact, reading to learn or using reading as a tool for learning and living is the essence of reading literacy concept advocated in the present research, where

readers can construct meaning from a variety of texts. They read to learn, to participate in communities of readers in school and everyday life, and for enjoyment (Mullis et al. 2004: 3).

In relation to this issue, De Beaugrande (1984: 159) points out that

learning to read subsumes all settings in which written texts are processed with the dominant (though not exclusive) goal of rehearsing, improving, or organizing the processes themselves. Reading to learn, on the other hand, subsumes all settings in which texts are processed with the dominant (though not exclusive) goal of acquiring knowledge about the topic domain underlying the text in use.

The main concern of 'learning to read' is developing reading strategies, understanding, and interests whereas, 'reading to learn' mainly intends to acquiring information through accessing reading strategies, understanding, and interests. In other words, 'learning to read' answers the question of: can a student read? Whereas, 'reading to learn' answers the question: can a student use reading independently as a means of living and life-long learning?

However, there is an overlap and a mutual relationship between the two strands: 'learning to read' and 'reading to learn' because students learn to read through texts and then acquire knowledge alongside developing their reading strategies, understanding, or interests. In the meantime, they acquire information counting on their reading ability as they use reading as a means for learning. Eventually, students in the Egyptian secondary schools need to be taught how to use 'reading to learn' and at the same time, how to refine their 'learning to read' or reading strategies, understanding, and interests and this

is the approach adapted in the present research. This meaning was stressed by Smith (2005) when she indicates that in the reading to learn stage

although reading skills continue to develop, potentially across the lifespan, there is little conscious awareness of this development, because the focus is on learning of content accessed through reading (p. 29).

Digging into the Egyptian reading situation in the secondary school reveals that 'learning to read' is the dominant strand in teaching and learning of reading for secondary students. As a result of that, there is no real difference between teaching and learning of reading in the elementary and the secondary school in Egypt. In other words, what is concerned with in teaching and learning of reading in the secondary schools is the same as what the elementary schools are concerned with (Te'eima, 1998: 91). Actually, this point shapes an important aspect of the problem of the present research. There are no real differences between teaching and learning of reading in both the elementary and the secondary school in Egypt, which requires developing an advanced reading literacy curriculum for the Egyptian secondary students that would be concerned with 'reading to learn' alongside 'learning to read'.

In the same vein, there are other drawbacks regarding the curriculum of reading in secondary schools in Egypt.

One can notice that there is no considering of important reading literacy targets e.g. speed reading, analyzing read texts critically, or using acquired information in solving problems in a creative and an innovative way. Thus, the main actual goal behind teaching of reading for the secondary students in Egypt is merely to enrich information and develop language vocabularies storage. Moreover, neither new teaching methods nor materials are introduced (Younis, 2005: 310).

Te'eima (2000: 103-104) analyses the targets of the curriculum of reading in the secondary education in Arab countries (14 countries, including Egypt). As a result of his

analysis he sets forth a list of reading targets that mainly include: literal, inferential, critical understanding in addition, developing interests in reading. In the same vein, a Curricula and General Guidelines Book published by the Ministry of Education (2002: 58) echoes what is found by Te'eima in his analysis regarding the reading targets in the secondary school.

Younis (2005: 309) argues that these targets need reconsideration in light of recent trends in reading literacy theory and practice i.e. more attention is needed to help students in using their prior knowledge/schemata to make connections between what they read and what they already know (Anderson, 1994). In addition, students need to be taught meta-comprehension strategies to monitor their own comprehension (Fitzerald, 1983; Pearson et al, 1992). Furthermore, students should be aware of different kinds of text structures they encounter (Taylor, 1992; Dymock, 1999). Also, students need to be strategic and fluent readers (McKenna, 2002; McKenna & Stahi, 2003). These points will be discussed later in detail (See chapter three, reading literacy targets).

Probing another perspective, content of the reading curriculum in the Egyptian secondary schools involves two kinds of textbooks: a 'varied-subjects textbook' which includes some chunks of factual and informational text, and a 'one-subject textbook' which is a narrative textbook e.g. story, or autobiography. The argument is that all students must study these two types of imposed textbooks each year throughout the secondary schools course. These textbooks do not meet children's interests and do not consider their different cultural backgrounds (Younis, 2005: 309). It is worth mentioning here that this type of content is the same as the one being taught in the elementary school and the only difference is the title and the difficulty/readability of the textbooks being imposed. From the instruction perspective,

teaching and learning of reading in the secondary education in Egypt takes place in a boring and a simple way that begins with some questions imposed by teacher on a certain topic, then students are involved in a silent reading, and

general or detailed discussion of the explicit information stated in a text, and finally students may practise oral reading (Younis, 2005: 310).

The teacher-centered approach is heavily implemented and adopted in the Egyptian schools. Teachers convey indisputable knowledge to passive learners which in turn, supports surface learning or memorization, recitation and perfect rote learning and diminishes deep learning and critical thinking (UNDP, 2003: 54; Ashoor & Abdelfatah, 2006).

Regarding the assessment perspective, reading is usually assessed through pen and paper tests against the targets already set. The assessment is mainly concerned with vocabularies, main and sub-main ideas stated in a text, conjunction of singulars and plurals, or text explicit information (Younis, 2005: 309). So, the assessment is mainly concerned with memorization and factual recall (UNDP, 2003: 54).

However, there are serious efforts being done to develop the curriculum of reading in the pre-university education in Egypt. The most recent and comprehensive one is 'The National Document for the Curriculum of Arabic Language' which presented by the Ministry of Education (2006). It provides

a guidelines vision for teaching Arabic language in the public education in terms of: the targets; content; teaching methods; and assessment techniques (p. 21).

However, there are some pitfalls, according to the researcher's point of view, in this document:

1. It still devalues the importance of many reading targets e.g. strategic reading; deep understanding; meta-comprehension strategies; teaching text structure; reading fluency; or more broadly reading to learn or using reading a means for living and life-long learning.

2. It still adopts and supports the current reading content i.e. two textbooks referred to above.

3. It provides only some general teaching methods and therefore, it is not providing special attention to discuss relevant techniques and considerations for reading literacy instruction in the secondary school.

4. Also, it indicates some general considerations for assessment with no special attention to reading in the secondary schools. In addition, it ignores assessing some critical targets e.g. fluency i.e. speed, expression, and accuracy; reading interests and attitudes; and meta-comprehension strategies. In addition, it is concerned with assessment of reading rather assessment for reading.

5. Above all, it presents a theoretical framework. In other words, it does not show the practicality of this document. In other words, the extent to which the practitioners/teachers and supervisors in the secondary school would accept what it presents.

It can be argued that what is stated earlier shows that there are shortcomings in the curriculum of reading in the secondary school in Egypt. These drawbacks are revealed in all aspects of that curriculum including its targets, content, instruction, or assessment. Thus, it is necessary to develop design for reading literacy curriculum in order to achieve 'what ought to be' as stated by reading literacy theory and practice for the secondary education.

It becomes very clear that the curriculum of reading for the secondary education in Egypt needs reconsideration since

> *comparing what actually takes place in Egypt to what reading experts stated, one can notice that teaching of reading for the secondary education in Egypt needs reconsideration (Younis, 2005: 309).*

The reading curriculum needs to be consistent with what is revealed by reading literacy theory and practice, as will be discussed later in this research (See chapters: two, three, four). As a consequence,

> *there is a dire need for a proposal of a reading curriculum in the secondary education in Egypt. This reading curriculum could achieve targets/objectives stated by experts in teaching and learning of reading; enhance the concept of reading and widen its horizons; balance between silent and oral reading, reading for study, reading for fun, and pays attention to free reading; consider student's interests and choices; and provide the proper readings for different backgrounds, and this is the novelty in such a proposal (Younis, 2005: 311).*

In addition, the Ministry of Education (2006) points out in its future policy for the developing pre-university education in Egypt that designing curricula should be 'relevant and flexible' which meet students' different backgrounds, interests and needs, and develops their scientific and critical thinking, ability to solve problems, active learning, and life-long learning (Ministry of Education, http://knowledge.moe.gov.eg/Arabic/about/politic/vision/, June 23rd, 2006). In this context, the present research comes to bridge the gap between 'what is' and 'what ought to be' as relevant and flexible curriculum according to the future education policy in Egypt. This research is filling a gap in the secondary education by designing a reading literacy curriculum which reflects new and robust trends in reading theory and practice that could be used in the Egyptian future policy for developing pre-university education particularly the secondary education, the concern of the current research.

1.6 Summary and Implications

From the foregoing discussion and from the researcher's experience, as a teacher of Arabic language for two years, a supervisor in the field training of Faculty of Education undergraduate students at the public schools for five years, also as an undergraduate

trainee for two years; one year at the elementary schools and another at the secondary schools, the researcher can state that:

1. This research is being conducted in Egypt, officially known as the Arab Republic of Egypt (ARE), in the general secondary school, where the education system is highly centralized, imposed, and controlled by the state, Ministry of Education.

2. The Modern Standard Arabic Language (MSAL), the official and the national language, is the medium of instruction in schools and students need to master its skills particularly reading in order to learn in and out of schools. Therefore, education policy pays a special attention to teaching and learning of the 'Arabic-subject' throughout all the pre-university education stages. The present research is congruent with this attention as it is concerned with the curriculum of reading in Arabic language in general secondary school since it prepares students for higher education.

3. The dominant culture of learning in the pre-university education in Egypt supports and encourages surface learning, memorization, and perfect rote learning and in the meantime, it diminishes deep learning, understanding, and meaningful learning. Actually, this kind of culture of learning is fuelled by many factors such as, poorly designed curricula, low salaries, low quality teacher training, a lack of facilities and the centralization in the education system. The current research is concerned with the reading literacy curriculum design in light of new and robust trends in reading theory and practice which in turn, takes a step towards changing this kind of culture of learning.

4. Probing the broad reading situation reveals that are no real differences between the curriculum of reading at the elementary (12-14 year-old) and the secondary education (15-17 year-old) in Egypt in terms of the reading targets, content, instruction, and assessment. Therefore, the present research is intended to design more advanced and developed curriculum of reading which considers the new trends in reading theory and practice for the Egyptian secondary students which

in turn, reflects what those students need and emphasizes 'reading to learn' and using reading as a means for living and life-long learning rather than 'learning to read'.

5. More emphasis was given to decoding and literal understanding in teaching of reading for the secondary education in Egypt. Also, little attention is paid to inferential and critical reading. In other words, the curriculum of reading in action is not emphasizing very important reading targets e.g. strategic reading, meta-comprehension strategies, teaching text structure, or reading fluency. Thus, the current research is intended to design a curriculum which considers such critical reading targets.

6. In addition, all students around Egypt study the same materials/textbooks without any consideration of differences among those students. As a result, these materials do not meet students' interests and needs which in turn, requires variation in the content/texts being presented or suggested to students in order to meet their different interests and in the meantime, achieve what students need to be taught. In other words, students need to be taught how to read different types of texts that they encounter in their life in and out of school.

7. The actual reading instruction heavily adopts a teacher-centered approach which leaves no chance for students' involvement or engagement in the learning process. Teachers convey indisputable information to passive learners who are, in such circumstances, forced to adopt memorization, rote learning, or surface learning as a way to pass exams and to gain high scores which shape their future in joining a higher education institute. On the contrary, the present research is concerned with outlining critical considerations in reading instruction that mainly help students to interact with teachers, peers, or texts they read, within classroom context.

8. The actual assessment techniques are pen and paper tests that are mainly concerned with measuring acquiring vocabularies, recall information and a little bit of critical and appreciative reading. So, the scope of reading assessment is not concerned with assessing crucial reading aspects e.g. strategic reading, reading interests and behavior, or fluency. In addition, it is neglecting using different assessment techniques e.g. portfolios, self-assessment, teacher's observations, or computer-assisted tests. Moreover, it is summative and collective i.e. being conducted by the end of the term or by the end of the course of study and comparing the student with his or her classmates. It is not concerned with assessing students individually. Above all, it is concerned with assessment of reading rather than assessment for reading. Thus, the present research is intended to address these neglected aspects of the assessment process as part of designing a new curriculum of reading literacy.

9. Above all, the current research is consistent with what is revealed as new and robust trends in reading theory and practice. Also, it is congruent with what is presented by the Egyptian Ministry of Education (2006) in its 'future policy' for developing 'relevant and flexible curricula' for the pre-university education specially secondary school.

10. Finally, it comes to bridge a gap in secondary education in the Egyptian context since, as stated earlier, there is a distance between 'what is' and 'what ought to be' in teaching and learning of reading in secondary school in Egypt.

The argument is that issues discussed in this chapter exemplify the basis for next chapters. The next chapter is concerned with reading literacy theory. Chapters: three and four discuss reading literacy targets, assessment, instruction and content respectively. In relating theory to practice, the researcher intends to get specialists', teachers', and supervisors' views through using a questionnaire and a semi-structured interview as will be discussed in chapters: five and six. Eventually, chapter seven bridges between theory and practice and outlines a reading literacy curriculum design (RLCD).

CHAPTER TWO: READING LITERACY THEORY

2.0 Introduction

In this chapter, the researcher discusses the concept of reading literacy; its dimensions; models; and asks what does all of this mean for the present research? In other words, what are the implications of this theoretical pedagogy for the current research in guiding discussion on reading literacy curriculum design its: targets, instruction, content, and assessment. Also and more broadly, it is concerned with clarifying the bonds and relationships between reading literacy and its broader context: literacy theory and language theory. The researcher intends to clarify the principles that underpin new trends in reading literacy theory and practice. It is worth mentioning that the concept of reading literacy advocated in this chapter reflects how far the gap between 'what is' in the reading situation in the Egyptian secondary school and 'what ought to be' in that situation. .

2.1 What is reading literacy?

It can be argued that, before 1970s the term 'literacy' was linked to informal education practices to offer illiterate adults a chance to learn basic reading and writing skills to be more effective in social life. On the other hand, reading was a well established field and linked to formal education settings. Today, the term 'literacy' is well established and central to formal education settings. It has been adopted for many applications such as, being used in place of reading and writing e.g. 'emergent literacy' in place of 'reading readiness' or 'literacy development' instead of reading or writing development or more broadly, 'literacy studies' in place of 'language arts' (Lankshear & Knobel, 2003).

The issue now is: why literacy? In other words, what is the reason behind the dominance of the notion of literacy over reading? The answer resides in the emergence of using literacy programmes themselves. Literacy programmes were initiated to make illiterate adults more effective in social life and help them in living more comfortable life. The word literacy implies a critical role for reading in improving students' life.

Reading literacy (...) gives people access to information and the ability to function in life (...) It is the key to knowledge and information (NAGB, 2004: 2).

The same notion is stressed by Au (2004) when defining literacy as

the ability and willingness to use reading and writing to construct meaning from printed text, in ways which meet the requirements of a particular social context (p. 7).

The term willingness stresses the social significance of using reading literacy for authentic communication purposes in students' lives. This highlights the role of the sociocultural perspective in language development and learning (Vygotsky, 1978; Street, 1984, 1994, 2001; Green et al, 1994; Kern, 2000). This notion inspired the International Association for the Evaluation of Educational Achievement (IEA) in 1991 to decide to

join the terms reading and literacy to convey a broad notion of what the ability to read means- a notion that includes the ability to reflect on what is read and to use it as a tool for attaining individual and societal goals (Mullis et al, 2004: 2).

Accordingly, reading literacy is defined as

the ability to understand and use those written language forms required by society and/or valued by the individual (...) Readers can construct meaning from a variety of texts. They read to learn, to participate in communities of readers in school and everyday life, and for enjoyment (p. 3).

It can be argued that this definition of reading literacy accomplishes what is revealed by recent theory and practice as will be indicated later in this chapter. Also, it fits and inspires reading literacy curriculum design (RLCD) advocated in the present research. This inspiration can be categorized in terms of reading literacy targets; content; instruction; and assessment.

Two important points are worth mentioning. Firstly, it can be said that despite the dominance of term 'literacy' over reading in recent years, the term 'reading' is still used on its own or even to refer to literacy as it is noticed from many publications (Ruddell & Unrau, 2004; Kamil et al, 2000; McKenna & Stahl, 2003). Secondly, the term 'literacy' has a broad sense as UNESCO (2008) says that

> *literacy has moved beyond the simple notion of a set of technical skills of reading, writing and calculating to one that encompasses multiple dimensions of these competencies. In acknowledging recent economic, political and social transformations- including globalization and the advancement of information and communication technologies (ICTs) (...). Literacy is central to all levels of learning, through all delivery modes. Literacy is an issue that concerns everybody (http://portal.unesco.org/education, July 3rd, 2008).*

The present research uses the term 'reading literacy'. The reason behind that is by joining the two terms reading and literacy in one, it broadens the horizons of and reveals what reading means and in the meantime, it uses literacy in a narrow sense which is concerned with reading, the concern of the present research. The question now is: what are the theoretical principles that underpin reading literacy? This will be discussed in the following section.

2.2 Reading literacy research

2.2.1 A brief historical background

Broadly speaking, the burgeoning interest in studying reading existed as early as the end of nineteenth century and the beginning of the twentieth century. This interest was influenced by many researchers e.g. W. Pringle Morgan (1896), Edmund Huey (1908), Edward L. Thorndike (1917), and William S. Gray (1922). In that early time, the major attention was paid to remedial reading as an attempt to help struggling readers. Yet since the 1950s, reading has become a recognized and a well-established field of study that

fuelled by interdisciplinary fields especially psychology, linguistics, and sociology (Harris & Sipay, 1980; Pearson & Stephens, 1994; Alexander & Fox, 2004).

It can be argued that, over the last five decades 'reading paradigms' or major changes in reading theory and practice can be captured and portrayed in four developmental stages as depicted in table 2.1. In each stage, the researcher intends to clarify the dominant learning theory and its influences on conceptualizing reading literacy in research and practice (Pearson & Stephens, 1994; Gaffney & Anderson, 2000; Alexander & Fox, 2004).

Table 2.1: Reading theory and practice stages

No.	Dominant Learning Theory	Reading concept	Reading practice
1	The era of conditioned learning (1950-1965). Influenced by Behaviorism e.g. B. F. Skinner (1904-1990)	Perceptual process	The focus was on teaching students a discrete set of skills e.g. identification of visual signals or letter-sound correspondences
2	The era of natural learning (1966-1975). Fuelled by linguistics e.g. N. Chomsky (born, 1928)	Natural process	Students have hardwired capacities and naturally programmed to acquire reading under favorable conditions offered by teaching
3	The era of information-processing (1976-1985). Influenced by cognitive psychology e.g. Herbert Simon (1916-2001)	Cognitive process	Explicit instruction was concerned with how students read and process information stated in a text; Individualistic and modifiable interpretations of written text; text-processing strategies; and stressing on schemata in comprehension of a text.
4	The era of sociocultural learning (1986-1995). Influenced by social and cultural anthropology e.g. L. S. Vygotsky (1896-1934)	Social process	Teaching was focusing on constructing an understanding of a text through social interactions between teachers, students, or texts.
5	The ear of engaged learning (1996-present)	Engaged process	Teaching is stressing the actively engagement and involvement of students and interactions among and between students, teachers and texts they read. Students are motivated knowledge seekers.

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There are some points that can be made on the foregoing review as follows:

1. Transition from behaviorism to cognitive theory is a shifting and major change but, the sociocultural view could be seen as an elaboration of the cognitive view (Anderson & Gaffney, 2000). Actually, the same thing applies to the engaged era which would be seen as an extension of sociocultural view. These changes exemplify developmental stages or maturation of reading literacy theory and practice.

2. Despite this developmental maturation,

   reading researchers still have not produced a well-accepted developmental theory that looks broadly at the nature of reading across the lifespan (Alexander & Fox, 2004: 58).

3. These shifts reveal not only a developmental maturation of the reading theory and practice but also reflect that 'reading literacy' is becoming a more complex and sophisticated process.

   While reading always involves physiological, psychological, or sociocultural dimensions, each era weighs these dimensions differently (Alexander & Fox, 2004:57).

Eventually, the researcher intends to probe 'reading literacy dimensions' in the following section. The aim is to understand what 'reading literacy' means and what the implications of that are to the present research.

2.2.2 Reading literacy dimensions

It is worth mentioning that discussing 'reading literacy dimensions' involves discussing dimensions of language, or literacy theory as well. In other words, what applies to literacy or language theory applies, in turn, to reading literacy theory. Also, what applies to reading literacy is very closely related to literacy and language theory. The present

analysis reflects how far reading literacy is related to and affiliated to literacy and language theory and more broadly to the learning theory.

It can be broadly argued that, since the 1960s 'reading literacy' has become more sophisticated and viewed as a multiple dimensional and interdisciplinary field, which is influenced and fuelled by

> *the linguists (...) then came the psychologists and the sociologists and psycholinguists and the sociolinguists and philosophers and the political theorists and critical theorists (...) reading is considered by so many to be a key to success in other scholastic endeavors (Pearson & Stephens, 1994: 35).*

The reading literacy horizon is broadened and it can be acknowledged as multi-interactive field (Kern, 2000; Whitehead, 2004).

Regardless of the historical perspective of which dimension comes into effect first, the fact is that 'reading literacy', today, is a multiple dimensional and interdisciplinary field. The researcher intends to probe these dimensions and how each dimension contributes in understanding 'reading literacy'. Moreover, the exploration attempts to clarify whether they can be seen as complementary to each other and be assimilated into a whole or not. Above all, what does all of this mean for the present research? What are the implications of this analysis for the 'reading literacy' advocated in the present research? The figure below depicts the interactive dimensions of 'reading literacy'.
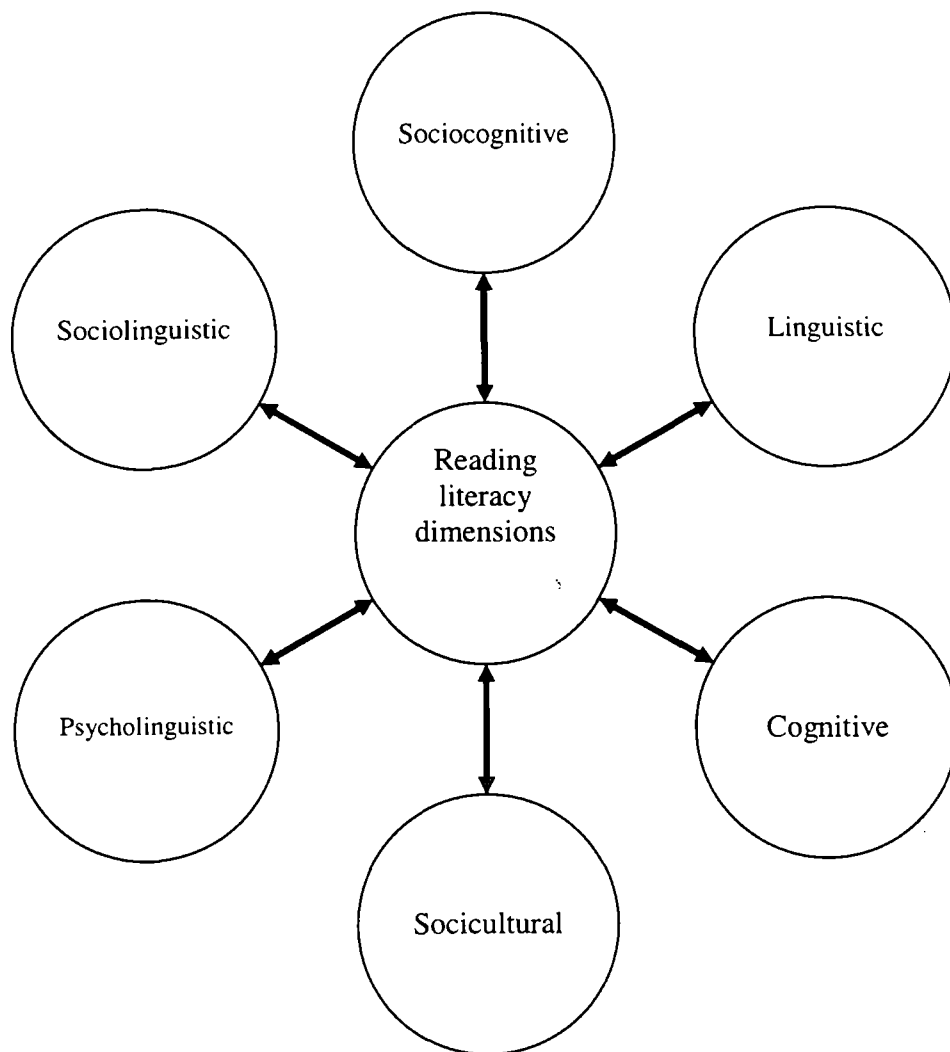
Figure 2.1: Reading literacy as multi-interactive and interdisciplinary process

The linguistic dimension

The first question to be asked is: what does the linguistic perspective hold for 'reading literacy'? Answering this question is not straightforward one. Fries (1962) advocates reading as a perceptual skill and how it could be taught from the standpoint of linguistics.

Learning to read, therefore, means developing a considerable range of high-speed recognition responses to specific sets of patterns of graphic shapes (p. xv).

Kern (2000: 38) explains that the linguistic dimension of 'literacy' involves students' ability to translate written symbols into verbal forms and vice versa. This involves and requires students' awareness of lexical, morphological, syntactic, semantic, and pragmatic knowledge, conventions that determine how these elements can be combined and ordered, interrelationships at all levels of orthography, lexicon, sentence, paragraph, and text, different types of texts and styles, and relationship between oral and written language or awareness of distinction between medium/language usage and mode/language use of expression.

It can be argued that the linguistic dimension highlights the role of students' awareness of written texts. This awareness involves lexical, phonological, syntactic, semantic, and pragmatic knowledge. Students' knowledge of features of texts needs to be developed. In other words, students need to be taught how to use written linguistic elements in constructing meaning from a text e.g. using context cues or text structure.

The cognitive dimension

The burgeoning interest in cognitive psychology has existed since the 1970s, and was largely investigated by Ulric Neisser (1967) who turned general attention to how the mind works and processes information.

There has been a shift from behaviouristic perspective of psychology to cognitive perspective. This has meant changing the emphasis of 'learning outcomes' as overt behaviors to 'learning processes' and how the mind works, processes, and understands information (Pearson & Stephens, 1994; Alexander & Fox, 2004).

The issue here is: what does this shift mean for 'reading literacy'? In fact, many researchers are influenced by the dominant cognitive theory and this influence is revealed into two main aspects: text-based learning and schema-based learning (Pearson

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& Stephens, 1994; Gaffney & Anderson, 2000: 58; Alexander & Fox, 2004). Schema theory, in a very simple way, highlights the role of the mental structure of prior knowledge represented in the memory in understanding new information stated in texts. This acquired information may fit into that structure or may require some changes in such structure (Rumelhart & Norman, 1976; Anderson & Pearson, 1984; Anderson: 1994). Also, researchers explain and stress the role of mental representations of text structures in enhancing an understanding of texts being read (Stein, 1978; Stein & Christine, 1975; Stein & Nezworski, 1978; Stein & Trabasso, 1981; Baker & Stein, 1978; Meyer, 1980, 1984, 1987; Dymock, 1998, 1999, 2005; Weaver & Kintsch, 1996). In addition, metacognition or meta-comprehension processes play a critical role in planning, monitoring, or evaluating an understanding of texts being read (Flavel, 1979; Garner, 1987; Kern, 2000) (See chapter three, meta-reading section).

It can be argued that, the main implications of the cognitive dimension for 'reading literacy' as advocated in the present research are as follows:

1. Highlighting the importance of comprehension and meta-comprehension processes and the role of schemata/prior knowledge in such processes.

2. Informing teachers about how to use students' prior knowledge as a starting point to help them to learn and acquire new information and ideas stated in texts they read. Instead of, trying to get this new information into students' minds.

3. Stressing the role of teaching text structures as a key factor for improving understanding.

The cognitive perspective emphasizes the central role of schema theory/prior knowledge in constructing meaning and acquiring new information and ideas stated in texts. It is worth mentioning that schema theory is originally used in philosophy by Immanuel Kant (1787) however, Bartlett (1932) is regarded as the first psychologist to use the term schema as it is used today (Anderson & Pearson, 1984: 255). This will be discussed later (See chapter three, schema theory and reading for meaning). However, the cognitive

perspective could not answer the question of where this meaning resides? Is it in the text, or in the author's mind, or in the student's mind, or in the interaction between the students and the text they read? (Pearson & Stephens, 1994: 32). This question leads to discussing the next dimension of 'reading literacy', the sociocultural perspective.

The sociocultural dimension

In the middle of 1980s and on into 1990s, it can be argued that the interest in social and cultural dimension of 'reading literacy' grew considerably (Gaffney & Anderson, 2000; Alexander & Fox, 2004). In fact, this attitude is influenced and colored by the growing attention given to the importance of social interaction in students' development and learning. This mainstream attention is fuelled by Lev S. Vygotsky (1978) and his followers Rogoff and Morelli (1989), Rogoff and Chavajay (1995), Wertsch (1980), and Wertsch and Tulviste (1992).

According to this perspective, researchers are influenced by the sociocultural view of development and language learning. As a result, reading literacy has been elaborated and portrayed as a social construct rather than cognitive process (Wray, Bloom & Hall, 1989; Street, 1984, 1994, 2001; Green et al, 1994; Gee, 1999; Kern, 2000). In this context, 'reading literacy' can be understood as a

> *Socially constructed phenomenon that is situationally defined and redefined within and across differing groups, including reading groups, classrooms, schools, communities, and professionals (Green et al: 1994: 124).*

In the same vein, Kern (2000: 23) stresses how far 'reading literacy' is well-interwoven into the social and cultural practices in a given context. "Literacy is a variable and intimately tied to sociocultural practices of language use in a given society that is of central in our teaching of language and culture".

Above of all, Street (1984, 1994, 2001) explains the sociocultural nature of reading literacy through presenting an 'ideological model' in contrasting with 'autonomous

model'. 'Reading literacy' according to 'autonomous model' is seen as a set of neutral and universal technical skills taught through schools whereas, an 'ideological model' considers 'reading literacy' as related to and sensitive of social and cultural practices in a given context. As consequences, the socialization process is very critical for participants to constructing the meaning of 'reading literacy'. This in turn, requires considering all stakeholders institutions that concerned with 'reading literacy' not just schools. It can be argued that the ideological standpoint of 'reading literacy'

> *recognizes a multiplicity of literacy; that the meaning and uses of literacy practices are related to specific cultural contexts (Street, 1994: 139).*

In this context, it can be argued that there are literacies rather than a single literacy (Lankshear & Knobel, 2003).

In addition, Holliday (1994) refers to the classroom as a social context or as a culture. He classifies classroom sociocultural context into two levels: the macro level, outside the classroom, which represents the wider societal and institutional influences on what happens in the classroom. The micro level, within classroom; which consists of socio-psychological aspect of group dynamics within the classroom. Actually, Holliday focuses on the macro level since the relationships between people within the classroom can only fully understood in terms of the wider macro picture.

Moreover, Holliday (1994) exemplifies how the classroom as a culture can be varied and so, reading literacy is not universally common or consistent practice rather, it is a socially intimate and varying practice according to given contexts (Street, 1984, 1994). To understand reading literacy as a social practice, Holliday (1994) presents a Culture-Sensitive Approach (CSA) that involves:

1. Learning about what happens between people in the classroom by ethnographic action research done by practitioners/teachers provide information about teaching methodology and how reading literacy can be taught in a given context.

2. Teaching methodology and practice to tell us about appropriate methodology. Practice informs us about the best methods for teaching such reading literacy in a given context.

A similar meaning is echoed by Street (1994: 149) when he points out three themes to be considered to understand local requests for different literacies.

1. Studying literacy practices in diverse cultural/ideological contexts rather than assuming dichotomy between literacy and illiteracy.

2. Starting where people are at to understand the cultural meanings and uses of literacy practices and to build reading literacy programmes. This point is stressed by Green et al (1994) as they point out that

> *to understand what literacy is and how students learn to be literate in a particular classroom, we must examine how members of a particular social group (a culture) construct and reconstruct literacy as part of everyday life (p. 125).*

3. Linking between theory and practice through the experiences of practitioners (e.g. teachers) who work in the field of literacy.

Furthermore, Green et al (1994) agrees with Holliday in his discussion of the classroom context. They refer to literacy as a social accomplishment involving interaction between micro and macro levels. The micro level, within the classroom, involves interaction between; teacher, student, and text. The macro level, outside classroom, involves home, peers group, institutions, and community. Unlike Holliday, they concentrate on discussing interaction within the classroom among, the teacher, student, text and how reading literacy socially constructed literacy within the classroom.

A similar meaning is presented by Moll (1994) who refers to interaction between community and classroom in developing literacy as a social practice. Moreover, she explains that

we must think of literacy (or literacies) as particular ways of using language for a variety of purposes, as a sociocultural practice with intellectual significance (p. 201).

The question now is: what are the implications of reading literacy as social practice for the present research? Some major points can be drawn from the foregoing discussion as follows:

1. Highlighting the role of practitioners (e.g. teachers or supervisors in the field) in understanding what students need to be taught in reading literacy. Also, they can help in informing how reading literacy can be taught or assessed or what types of texts students need. This would be very useful in planning and a designing reading literacy curriculum in the present research.

2. Creating a supportive learning environment at the macro level as referred above e.g. engaging parents by increasing their awareness of how they can help and make a difference in reading literacy for their children. This meaning inspires and in the meantime, is extended by family literacy studies.

3. Creating and stressing interactive opportunities within classroom context i.e. micro level. Teachers, students, and texts interact and share understandings and ideas. This helps in constructing a proper understanding of a text.

4. Stressing the idea of reading literacies rather than literacy. In other words, how far teaching and learning of reading literacy is related to one's own purposes. Also, it stresses how reading literacy is used to improve students' social and cultural life.

The psycholinguistic dimension

Broadly speaking, psycholinguistics

is the shared area of psychology and linguistics, and it studies language as a major manifestation of human thinking and learning (Whitehead, 2004: 7).

In this context, researchers are influenced and fuelled by what is revealed by linguists about the nature of language development.

Chomsky revolutionized the field of linguistics and paved the way for equally dramatic changes in the way that psychologists thought about and studied the processes of language comprehension and language acquisition (Pearson & Stephens, 1994: 25).

It can be argued that psycholinguists are concerned with implications of linguistics for 'reading literacy' in two main areas: acquisition and understanding (Brown & Ottinger, 1970; Smith & Goodman, 1971; Smith, 1971; Goodman, 1973; Goodman & Burke, 1969, 1973). To sum up, the psycholinguistic perspective has a number of influences on the field of 'reading literacy' as summarized by Pearson and Stephens (1994) as follows:

1. Valuing 'authentic texts' that rely on natural language patterns and encourage students to use their prior knowledge of language to predict meanings. In contrast, it undermines the value of 'artificial texts' that rely on high-frequency words in short and choppy sentences.

2. Rethinking teaching and learning of reading in a fundamental way, so teachers' role is to how to help students to read rather than how to make them readers. This in turn, emphasizes the natural view of 'reading literacy' and the active role of students (Smith, 1971).

3. Highlighting that 'reading literacy' is a constructing meaning process depending on one's own prior knowledge. This view considers 'reading literacy' as a

process rather than perception and makes explicit links between oral and written language acquisition. As a consequence, 'reading literacy' can be viewed as making meanings rather than a set of technical skills (Smith, 1971).

4. Appreciating students' efforts as readers and seeing errors/miscues as generative rather than negative ones. They are viewed as windows into workings of the readers' mind and eventually turn the attention to understanding rather than articulation (Goodman, 1973; Goodman & Burke, 1969, 1973).

It can be argued that the psycholinguistic perspective views reading literacy as a mixture of the cognitive perspective and the linguistic perspective. It is a step towards multidisciplinary view of reading literacy. In the same direction, the sociolinguistic dimension comes as will be discussed in the following section.

The sociolinguistic dimension
In a broad sense,

> *language is, nevertheless, a crucial method of social communication, cultural cohesion and dissemination (...) Sociolinguistics is the branch of language studies and seeks to explore these complex areas of linguistics and sociology (Whitehead, 2004: 7).*

The argument is that the sociolinguistic dimension is concerned with the interrelationships among language and social life and culture in a given context. In other words, how language interacts with its context/social and cultural life in a given society, and the consequences of that for teaching and learning of language particularly 'reading literacy'.

The sociolinguistics dimension is parallel with psycholinguistics one, discussed above, and it has a number of influences on the field of language particularly 'reading literacy' as summarized by Pearson and Stephens (1994) as follows:

1. Viewing dialects as linguistic differences not deficits, so the goal of schooling is not to eradicate the students' dialects, instead it should find ways to accommodate the students' use of dialect while they learn to read and write. This in turn, draws attention to link between spoken and written language.

2. Rethinking and expanding the notion of context to involve not only print clues on read pages but also, to include home and community contexts.

3. Heightening our consciousness about the 'reading literacy' as a social and cultural construct. This social construct is consistent with cognitive construct. Eventually, 'reading literacy' became a part of a bigger and more complex a set of contexts than it had been ever before.

It can be argued that the sociolinguistic perspective broadens the horizon of reading literacy to involve the social and cultural contexts. In other words, it views reading literacy as a mixture of the sociocultural and linguistic perspectives. In the same vein, the sociocognitive dimension comes as will be discussed in the following section.

The sociocognitive dimension

The sociocognitive view of 'reading literacy', as its name implies, is concerned with the interaction between linguistic, cognitive, and social dimensions of 'reading literacy' (Gee, 2004; Pearson & Stephens, 1994). It portrays 'reading literacy' as a constructing meaning process through interaction between; teachers, students, and texts within the classroom context (Ruddell & Unrau, 1994, 2004).

Thus, Kern (2000) stresses on the multiplicity nature of reading literacy and points out that

Taken alone, any one of the perspective we have considered -linguistic, cognitive, or sociocultural- provides only a partial view of literacy. Taken

together, however, the three perspectives complement one another and more adequately illuminate literacy's multiple facets (p. 37).

To sum up, the forgoing discussion reveals that the field of reading literacy is a transdisciplinary or an interdisciplinary field that is influenced most notably by linguistics, psychology, and sociology (Pearson & Stephen, 1994; Alexander & Fox, 2004).

A historical glance shows clearly that the field of literacy is not one that has evolved through the adoption, adaption, and rejection of successive paradigms generated from within. Rather, paradigms in literacy research have been borrowed from various fields that have richly informed research topics and methods (Dillon, O'Brien & Heilman, 2004: 1536).

Eventually, reading literacy as a transdisciplinary field has two main pitfalls as stated by Dillon, O'Brien & Heilman (2004). They explain that

fields such as literacy, informed by a range of disciplines, remain a set of subcommunities with incompatible assumptions and methodologies and little common language (p. 1537).

The issue now is: how can the field of reading literacy be an independent discipline? which has its community of inquiry, own compatible assumptions and methods, and own distinctive scientific common language. Actually, this can be achieved by adapting 'pragmatism', originated by Charles Peirce (1839-1914) (wikipedia, http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Charles_Peirce, September 15th, 2008), as

a new stance for academics and communities of inquirers. Pragmatism is not a paradigm adapted from those that are popular; rather, it is a revolutionary break in our thinking and practice relating to inquiry. As literacy community, we need to challenge ourselves to step back and think collectively and individually

about the inquiry in which we are engaged (Dillon, O'Brien & Heilman, 2004: 1554).

It is worth mentioning that reading literacy researchers intend to summarize what is revealed by theory/research from different dimensions. They invent 'models'. The main reason is to visualize reading literacy components and interrelationships among these components. This in turn may raise new issues to be investigated or inform teaching and learning of reading literacy. This will be indicated in the following section.

2.3 Reading Literacy Models

It goes without saying that there is a myriad of reading literacy research done throughout the last fifty years. One of the major interests of this immense body of research is to clarify and find out how students understand a text; what makes and constructs this understanding; and how this can inform instruction of reading literacy. Reading literacy researchers intend to encapsulate theory/research in a representative and reflective language through 'models'. These models may direct new research or inform practice.

In this context, the term 'model' needs to be clarified. In other words, before embarking on discussing 'reading literacy models, it is useful to explain what does 'model' refer to? Ruddell and Unrau (2004) point out that a model

> *represents in ordinary language or graphic form the components of an object or process and explains how those components function and interact with one another. Models are metaphors that help us visualize and understand research and theories that explain components of the reading process (p. 1116).*

The foregoing quotation implies two main points: the significance of reading literacy models and the relationship between models and theory. A model is not a synonym for a theory (Lachman, 1960). It is a metaphoric and visualized representation of a theory.

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A theory is an explanation of a phenomenon (such as the reading process), while a model serves as a metaphor to explain and represent a theory (...) The theory is thus more dynamic in nature than the model but describes the way the model operates; the model is frequently static and represents a snapshot of a dynamic process (Ruddell, Ruddell & Singer, 1994: 812).

This leads to the significance of models. Reading literacy researchers intend to use models for some reasons, chief among them: these models visualize conceptual/theoretical frameworks of reading literacy components and clarify interactions among these components (Lachman, 1960; Ruddell, Ruddell & Singer, 1994). The significance of this is to enhance and deepen educators' understanding of how students understand a text; what could hamper their understanding; and how it could be improved. In addition, it provides suggestions and clues for instructional interventions strategies (Ruddell & Unrau, 2004: 1117). The issue arises here is: what is the implication/significance of discussing reading literacy models for the present research? An answer can be drawn through the following discussion.

It can be argued that reading literacy models are derived from and visualize a body of theoretical reading literacy research. In the meantime, they may direct new research to clarify a certain point(s) that has been raised by the model itself and needs more investigations. In addition, it informs instruction and interventions to improve reading literacy practice. It is worth mentioning that reading literacy models

like a snapshot, depict a moment in time described in ordinary language processed linearly, whereas both reading and writing are continuous, recursive, and multileveled processes (Ruddell & Unrau, 2004: 1116).

These models reflect and represent a theory dominant in a certain time. This explains why and how there is a myriad of such models as research progresses and theory develops.

The argument is that reading literacy models were formulated and developed since the 1960s (Singer, 1970). They are developed and gradually become more sophisticated as the theory and research progress, elaborate and swell. This enlarges the horizons of models to reflect and represent what theory and research reveal about reading literacy as a perceptual, a cognitive, or a sociocultural process as stated above. In addition, models may be descriptive, or prescriptive, and even descriptive models may involve prescriptive elements (Byram, 2008). This is the case in reading literacy model advocated in the present research. In other words, the majority of reading literacy models tries to answer the question of: 'how students understand a text they encounter?' They describe what happens when students read. This description implies some elements which can be used in prescribing/informing 'what ought to be' in reading literacy curriculum design in terms of its targets, assessment, instruction, and content. In answering the above broad question, reading literacy models can be categorized into a tri-partite classification as follows: bottom-up models; top-down models; and interactive models.

2.3.1 Bottom-up reading literacy models

Geyer (1970), Singer (1970) and Rumelhart (1994, 2004) refer to some reading literacy models in the late1960s and early 1970s e.g. Heron-Harcum model (1966), Geyer (1966; 1970), Guogh (1972), and LaBerge and Samuels (1974). It can be argued that reading literacy had been represented by these early models as a perceptual process. The central concern of these models is how students perceive a text they encounter. The answer can be explained as follows:

1. Reading proceeds from the part to the whole i.e. form visual representation, to phonological, and then semantic representation. In other words, it happens in sequential transformations from characters, to phonemes, to lexicon, and then syntactic and semantic levels (Rumelhart, 2004).

2. The emphasis is paid to the features of written text that students read, and reading happens when students successfully perceive and recognize textual information stated in texts they read.

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3. In addition, reading happens in a linear bottom-up sequence. This linear perception means that a lower level may affect higher one and not vice versa. This implies no interactions would happen among these linear levels (Rumelhart, 2004).

This bottom-up models represent reading literacy as a perceptual process which can be useful for the beginners. The argument is that beginning readers need to be taught reading as a set of skills such as, letter-sound correspondence and word sight attack. In other words, students at this early stage need more emphasizing on word recognition. This does not devalue the critical role of comprehension or what students bring to understand a text they encounter, which will be discussed in the following section.

2.3.2 Top-down reading literacy models

In the contrast to the bottom-up view of how students understand a text, there is a parallel body of reading literacy models that gives a central role of what students bring to a text. This trend is supported most notably by Goodman and Burke (1969, 1973), and Smith (1976, 1978). According to the top-down view, students' prior knowledge/schemata plays a key role in an understanding of a text (Rumelhart, 1976, 1981; Harris & Sipay, 1980; Anderson & Pearson, 1984; Anderson, 1994, 2004). In addition, proponents of the top-down view advocate the critical role of text structure in understanding and recalling information from read text (Freeman, 1987; Stein & Trabasso, 1981; Stein & Christine, 1975; Baker & Stein, 1978; Meyer, Brandt & Bluth, 1980; Dymock, 1998, 1999). Furthermore, students approach texts intentionly and selectively. In other words, they are actively seeking information that serves their purposes for reading. They do not account for letter by letter or word by word identification as mediation for understanding. Rather, they count on their prior knowledge in achieving that understanding (Smith, 1976).

From this brief discussion, it can be argued that the top-down models visualize reading literacy as a cognitive process and account for the following points:

1. Highlighting what students have and bring in constructing meaning. Students' prior knowledge/schemata plays a central role in their understanding of texts they confront.

> *Normal reading seems to begin, proceed, and end in meaning, and the source of meaningfulness must be the prior knowledge in the reader's head. Nothing is comprehended if it does not reflect or elaborate upon what the reader already knows (Smith, 1976: 8).*

2. Students read purposefully and selectively.

> *The inside-out view in fact begins with intention (…) The reader looks for the featural information that he needs and ignores information that is irrelevant or redundant to his purposes (Smith, 1976: 6-7).*

In other words, students do not need to process every letter or word in a text since this amount is reduced by relying on their prior knowledge (Nicholson, 1992: 133). Students get meaning and understand a text by sampling as much as necessary graphic information in a text to confirm or reject predictions that based on their prior knowledge and language competence (Harris & Sipay, 1980: 7).

> *3. The inside-out perspective does not require recourse to spoken language for the comprehension of print. Meaning is directly accessible through print (Smith, 1976: 7).*

They can use context cues to predict meaning.

The question now is: if understanding depends on the students' prior knowledge and language competence what can beginners do? This top-down view of reading literacy is to do with understanding rather than word identification. This in turn would suit a category of students who have a good experience and knowledge of language

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particularly word identification. It can be argued that students simultaneously use all available sources of information to draw meaning from a text. This view is advocated by the interactive models in the following section.

2.3.3 Interactive reading literacy models

It can be argued that bottom-up models prioritize graphic information and word identification in understanding, while top-down models prioritize students' prior knowledge in an understanding of printed texts. Whereas, reading literacy is an interactive process that simultaneously mixes between bottom-up and top-down views. Interactive models reflect the multidimensional and interactive perspectives of reading literacy as a perceptual, a cognitive, a sociocultural, or recently as an engaged process (Rumelhart, 1985, 1994, 2004; Ruddell & Unrau, 1994, 2004; Kintsch, 1994, 2004; Samuels, 1994, 2004; Rosenblatt, 1994, 2004; Gee, 2004; Mathewson, 1994, 2004; Alexander & Fox, 2004).

Rumelhart (2004) points out how reading literacy as an interactive process is distinctive from both bottom-up and top-down views of it. He says that

> reading is at once a perceptual and a cognitive process. It is a process that bridges and blurs these traditional distinctions. Moreover, a skilled reader must be able to make use of sensory, syntactic, semantic, and pragmatic information to accomplish his task. These various sources of information appear to interact in many complex ways during the process of reading (p. 1149).

It can be argued that reading literacy is not only a multi-interactive process that combines perceptual, cognitive, sociocultural perspectives but also, this interaction happens simultaneously. In other words, students use all available sources of knowledge selectively and simultaneously to construct a meaning. All sources of meaning are important according to the need. This is stressed by Rumelhart (2004) when he points out that

all of the various sources of knowledge, both sensory and nonsensory, come together at once place, and the reading process is the product of the simultaneous joint application of all knowledge sources (pp. 1163-1164).

Moreover, interactive models highlight the role of social and cultural interaction in negotiating and constructing meaning of a text. This interaction can be in the classroom among teachers, students, or texts (Ruddell & Unrau, 1994, 2004; Wray, 2004), or outside schools (Alvermann et al, 2004). In addition, students interact very closely with texts they read. In other words,

instead of two fixed entities acting on one another, the reader and the text are two aspects of a total dynamic situation. The meaning does not reside ready-made in the text or in the reader but happens or comes into being during the transaction between reader and text (Rosenblatt, 2004: 1369).

From another perspective, students adapt different stances from efferent-aesthetic continuum when approaching a text to read and these stances differ according to their purposes for reading and the type of text they read (Rosenblatt, 2004). Above all, interactive models are concerned with students' engagement and highlight the role of attitudes and intention in encouraging such involvement (Mathewson, 1994, 2004). This is supported by the recent trend of the reading literacy engagement or the era of engagement (Alexander & Fox, 2004). In the meantime, it stresses the role of motivation in understanding of a text (Guthrie et al, 2004; Guthrie, a2008, b2008).

It can be argued that there is an amalgam of reading literacy models each of which tries to represent and highlight a certain aspect of this multi-interactive process. The issue now is: which model can serve as a theoretical representation and reflect and visualize the components of reading literacy process advocated in the present research? And why?

Upon perusal of reading literacy models, the researcher adopts the Sociocognitive Interactive Model (SIM) by Ruddell and Unrau (1994, 2004). This model seems to fit the present research and the reasons behind that are:

1. To a wide extent, it accomplishes, represents, and visualizes what research has informed about reading literacy as a multi-interactive and a meaning constructing process as stated above.

2. It describes concrete guidelines and representation of what happens in negotiating, constructing, and monitoring of meaning within the classroom context between teacher, texts, and students. This can be of help especially for curriculum designers and teachers in creating such interactive opportunities within the classroom context.

3. It views students as engaged and actively seeking, negotiating, constructing, and monitoring meaning. They interact cognitively and affectively with texts, teachers, or peers. Engaged, self-motivated and self-regulated readers are stressed by recent trends (Guthrie et al, 2004; Alexander & Fox, 2004; Mathewson, 1994, 2004; Guthrie, a2008).

4. It considers teachers as actively guiding and making instructional decisions in negotiating, constructing, and monitoring meaning. They are interacting cognitively and affectively with students and texts within the classroom context.

5. It stresses the role of sociocultural interaction within the classroom context to negotiate, construct, and represent meaning or instruction. This interaction has a tri-partite face; teacher, students, and texts. This meaning is stressed by Street (1984, 1994, and 2001), Green et al (1994), and Kern (2000).

6. It can be argued that this model fits reading literacy for secondary students. Since it stresses reading for meaning, using prior beliefs and knowledge, negotiating meaning through interaction, self-regulating and motivated readers ...etc. All of

these issues are needed to secondary students rather than beginners as will be indicated later (See chapter three, reading literacy targets).

The reader   **The teacher**

Prior beliefs and knowledge	Knowledge use and control	Text and classroom context	Knowledge use and control	Prior beliefs and knowledge

| Affective conditions: motivation for reading, attitude toward reading and content. reader's stance, sociocultural values and beliefs | Knowledge construction process: purpose setting, planning and organizing, strategy construction | | Instructional decision making process: purpose setting, planning and organizing, strategy construction | Affective conditions: motivation to engage students; instructional stance, sociocultural values and beliefs |

Learning environment

Meaning negotiating process: teacher, students, text, classroom community

Text, task, source of authority and sociocultural meanings.

Reader executive and monitor: attention attocation, reviewing, reconstructing.	Teacher executive and monitor: attention attocation, reviewing, reconstructing.

Text representation.

Instructional representation.

Cognitive conditions: Declarative, procedural. And conditional knowledge; knowledge of language; word analysis; text processing strategies; metacognitive strategies; knowledge of classroom and social interaction; personal and world knowledge

Cognitive conditions: Declarative, procedural. and conditional knowledge; knowledge of meaning construction process; knowledge of literature and content area; teaching strategies; metacognitive strategies; personal and world knowledge

Outcomes of instructional decision making
1. semantic/lexical knowledge
2. interpretation of text
3. discussion
4. written responses
5. knowledge acquisition
6. motivational changes
7. changes in attitudes, values and belief

Outcomes of instructional decision making
1. semantic/lexical knowledge
2. interpretation of text
3. discussion
4. written responses
5. knowledge acquisition
6. motivational changes
7. changes in attitudes, values and belief
8. insights into reader affect and cognition
9. reflective insights into instruction

Figure 2.2: The SIM of reading literacy: reading as a meaning construction process: the reader, the text, the teacher within the classroom context, from Ruddell and Unrau (2004: 1465)

Before embarking on discussing the components of the SIM of reading literacy, the question which arises here is: how does it conceptualize reading literacy? In this context, "reading is conceptualized as a meaning-construction process in the instructional context of the classroom" (Ruddell & Unrau, 2004: 1464). This meaning-construction process happens through interaction between three major components: students, teachers, and texts within the classroom context.

First of all, students are actively constructing, monitoring, and representing meaning of texts they confront. They interact affectively and cognitively using their prior beliefs and knowledge. This process is planned, organized, guided and overseen by their knowledge use and control. The outcomes of this meaning-making process may take a variety of forms that involve new semantic/lexical knowledge, interpretation of texts, acquisition of knowledge, discussion, written responses, or motivation, attitude, value, and belief changes.

Teachers, the second major component of the SIM, are mirror images of the students. In other words, they actively seek, construct, monitor, and represent instruction of how meaning-construction process can be tackled. Teachers are making instructional decisions. These decisions are shaped and influenced by their prior beliefs and knowledge. This designing-instruction process is planned, guided and controlled by the teachers' knowledge use and control. The outcomes of this designing-instruction process may take a variety of forms, ranging from new semantic/lexical knowledge, to interpretation of texts, motivation, attitude, value, belief changes, insights into students affective and cognitive conditions, or reflective insights into instruction.

Finally, the text and classroom context is the third major component of the SIM. This component refers to the learning environment in which the meaning-negotiating process and making-instructional decisions occur. According to the SIM the

> meaning-negotiation process involves interplay across text, task, source of authority, and sociocultural meanings (Ruddell & Unrau, 2004: 1501).

The meaning-negotiation process accounts for understandings and interpretations of texts according to certain purposes assigned to read texts. The source of authority/meaning resides in the interaction between text, student, teacher, and the classroom community. In addition, these interpretations are influenced by social and cultural life in the school and the classroom community.

The question now is: what are the implications of SIM for the present research? Some major implications can be derived from the SIM for the present research. It can be argued that the SIM of reading literacy highlights the role of prior beliefs and knowledge in constructing-meaning and designing-instruction process. This prior beliefs and knowledge involves two main perspectives: affective conditions and cognitive conditions. These processes of constructing-meaning or designing-instruction begin with and are based on the readers' or teachers' prior beliefs and knowledge. In the meantime, they reshape these beliefs and knowledge as a result of interaction and negotiation between students, texts, teachers within the classroom context (See chapter three, schema theory and reading literacy).

In addition, it emphasizes the role of interaction in construction meaning or making instruction. This interaction happens within the classroom context between teachers, students, and texts they read. Actually, the interaction is central for reading literacy as a meaning constructing process. In other words, proper meanings of texts reside in this interaction. Thus, it is very critical for instruction to create such interactive opportunities within the classroom context. In addition, instruction should account for both students' and teachers' inputs and approaches to reading. This issue inspires and guide discussion regarding reading literacy instruction (See chapter four and six, approaches to reading literacy instruction).

Moreover, the SIM clearly stresses that meaning is the essence of reading literacy process. It portrays reading literacy as a meaning construction process, which in turn implies that reading literacy curriculum design should account for reading for meaning as a central target to be involved. This is related very closely to students' prior

knowledge and beliefs/schemata as stated above (See chapter three and six, reading literacy targets). Text is a key for meaning construction process; it is the context in which this process must happen. This view is consistent with the concept of reading literacy as "the ability to understand and use those written language forms required by society and/or valued by the individual" (Mullis et al, 2004: 3). This guides the discussion for reading literacy content (See chapter four and six, reading literacy content).

In addition, the SIM explains the outcomes of both meaning construction process and making instruction process. These outcomes obviously include developing in knowledge, understanding, strategies, attitudes, motivation and interests. It is evident these outcomes need to be considered in setting reading literacy curriculum targets, instruction, content, and assessment. This will be discussed throughout the rest of this thesis.

It is worth noting that the SIM does not explain the role of assessment in reading literacy. Assessment plays a central role for informing instruction and improving reading literacy (See chapter three, reading literacy assessment). The other point to be made in this context is reading literacy curriculum needs to highlight the significance of reading in improving students' lives, and using reading as a tool for learning and living. The social significance of reading literacy is that

> readers can construct meaning from a variety of texts. They read to learn, to participate in communities of readers in school and everyday life, and for enjoyment (Mullis et al, 2004: 3).

To conclude, the SIM of reading literacy serves as a guide for the discussion throughout the rest of the present thesis, and will be more apparent in chapter three and four which are concerned with reading literacy targets, assessment, instruction, and content.

CHAPTER THREE: READING LITERACY: TARGETS AND ASSESSMENT

3.0 Introduction

Since the main concern of the present research is to design a reading literacy curriculum for secondary school students in Egypt, this chapter is concerned with clarifying two major components of such curriculum: targets and assessment. The researcher combines those two components since assessment is usually being conducted against predefined targets of the curriculum. The researcher intends to clarify and specify what should be taught (targets), and how these targets can be assessed (assessment). In other words, what reading literacy curriculum involves in terms of knowledge, understanding, strategies, and behaviours, and which assessment techniques contribute to assess these targets or more precisely to improve these targets. In addition, this chapter comes as a natural extension of the discussion in the previous chapter. It elaborates on and uses what is revealed about reading literacy theory in the preceding chapter in discussing reading literacy targets and assessment.

3.1 Reading literacy targets

Broadly speaking, reading literacy targets, in the present research, refer to and set out what secondary school students, in Egypt, are expected to have by the end of the reading literacy course of study. Through the theoretical analysis of reading literacy targets, the researcher intends to answer the research sub-question of "What should be taught (targets) in reading literacy curriculum for secondary school students in Egypt?" Furthermore, reading literacy definition deserves to be mentioned to remind the reader. Reading literacy refers to

> *the ability to understand and use those written language forms required by society and/or valued by the individual. (...) Readers can construct meaning from a variety of texts. They read to learn, to participate in communities of readers in school and everyday life, and for enjoyment (Mullis et al, 2004: 3).*

This definition complements and is congruent with what is revealed by reading literacy research as indicated in chapter two. Any reading literacy curriculum needs to carefully consider and balance between three major dimensions or perspectives of reading targets: developmental reading e.g. reading for meaning; functional reading e.g. reading for information; and recreational reading e.g. reading for enjoyment (Harris & Sipay, 1980: 44). Precisely, the targets

> *for reading literacy are to develop good readers who:*
> 1. *Read with enough fluency to focus on the meaning of what they read;*
> 2. *Form an understanding of what they read and extend, elaborate, and critically judge its meaning;*
> 3. *Use various strategies to aid their understanding and plan, manage, and check the meaning of what they read;*
> 4. *Apply what they already know to understand what they read;*
> 5. *Read various texts for different purposes;*
> 6. *Possess positive reading habits and attitudes (NAGB, 2004: 2).*

In addition, it can be argued that students need to be engaged in and taught all these major targets at some level of sophistication. As they progress they become more expert and have a broad and a deep sense of what reading literacy means and involves (Pearson et al, 1992; Duffy & Roehler, 1993). The conceptual approach to methodology in this research is captured in figure 3.1. The central focus of reading literacy curriculum for the secondary school students is conceived of as having five distinct elements: reading literacy for meaning, reading literacy fluency, strategic reading literacy, reading literacy engagement, and meta-reading literacy. This will be discussed throughout the first section of this chapter.
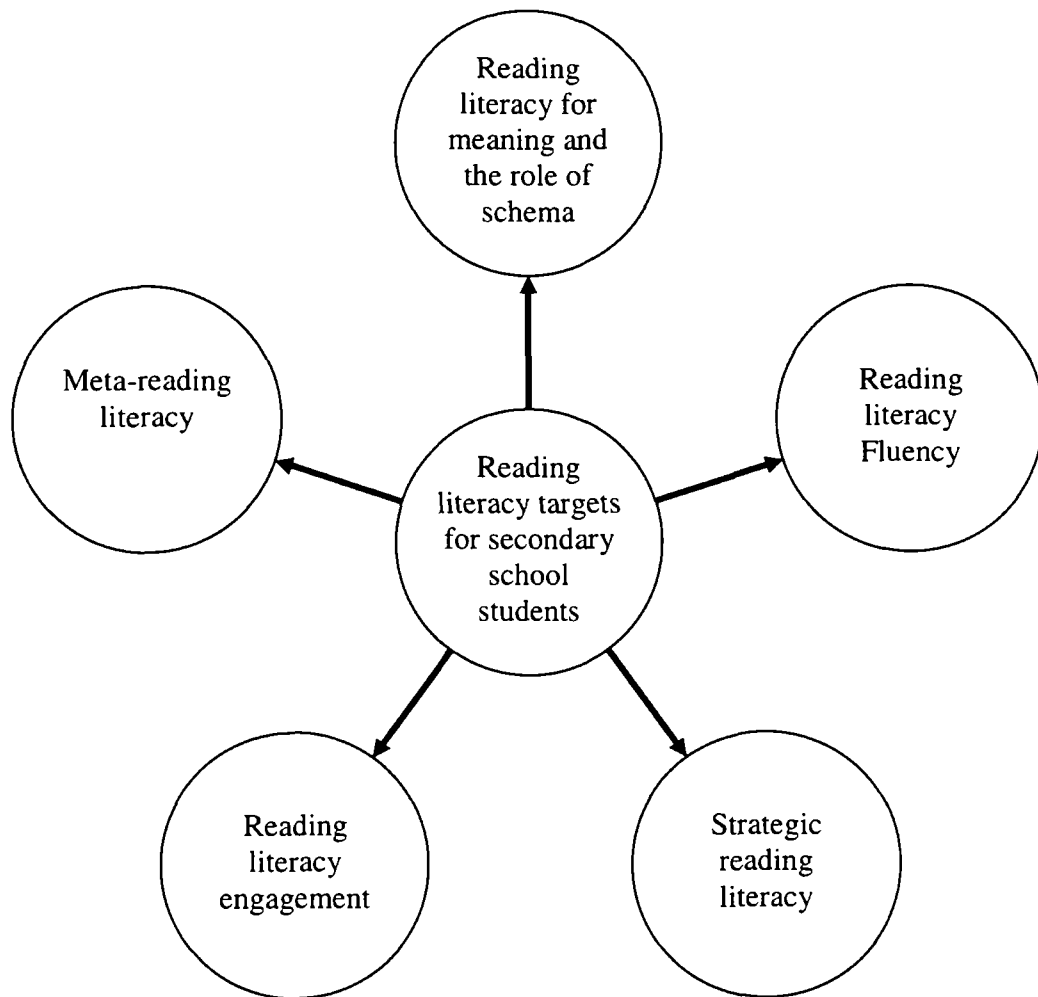
Figure 3.1: Reading literacy targets for secondary school students

3.1.1 Reading literacy for meaning

In this section, the researcher intends to answer the question of 'reading for what?' It can be argued that the essential target for any reading is the meaning. In other words, regardless of the purpose for reading, readers need to get and construct meaning of what they read. They need to understand texts they encounter. Whether they read for information, or to perform a task, or for enjoyment, or even to learn to read, reading for meaning is the critical target for any reading. Since reading without constructing

meaning of what is being read equals very little (Lapp & Flood, 1978; Harris & Sipay, 1980; Duffy & Roehler, 1993; Chapman & King, 2003).

Any examination of the constituent skills of effective reading would place a high priority on the abilities of readers to understand the texts they are reading. Without understanding, readers can not respond to, analyse or evaluate this text (Wray, 2004: 9).

The question which arises in this context is: what does reading for meaning mean and what does it mean to be a comprehending reader? Regarding this issue, reading literacy for meaning involves many cognitive processes that comprehenders need to possess. Before embarking on discussing these processes in details, Rasslan (2005:141) points out that there are many classifications of these processes: convergent and divergent processes; lower order and higher order processes; or a set of processes. He adds that regardless of these classifications, students get engaged in the understanding process seeking and constructing meaning from a text they encounter. This meaning is stressed by Harris and Sipay (1980) when they explain that

correlations among reading comprehension tests are high and that there is not complete agreement as to how to classify the skills involved (pp. 480-481).

Therefore, it is more practical to consider reading literacy for meaning as a set of simultaneous and interrelated processes. The argument is that each process, no doubt, involves some sort of reasoning, some level of sophistication, and some kind of consciousness. As long as reading literacy pertains to meaning as stated above and reading literacy for meaning involves some processes, this would be of help in specifying reading literacy targets (RLT) in the present research.

Broadly speaking, reading literacy for meaning involves some processes which can be broadly categorized under three main categories as follows.

1. Literal processes for explicit meaning, where students process the text explicit information and read the lines to get primary, literal, and straightforward meanings stated in the text.

2. Inferential processes for implicit meaning, where students process text implicit information, and read between lines to seek and interpret intended meanings by the author, and probe for greater depths of meanings.

3. Reflective processes, where students analyze text information and pass their personal judgements about the text or the author. Also, students go beyond the lines, and start with an inquiry and go beyond implications derived from the text, and extrapolate from what is read to reach new ideas, conclusions, or applications of what they read in their everyday life (Duffy & Sherman, 1972; Lapp & Flood, 1978; Harris & Sipay, 1980; Alnaqa & Hafez, 2002; Mullis et al, 2004; NAGB, 2004; Rasslan, 2005; Younis, 2005; Te'eima & El-Shoaibi, 2006).

In the same context, it is worth mentioning that readers process text and construct meaning by employing simultaneous meaning processes (Ruddell & Unrau, 1994, 2004; Rumelhart, 1994, 2004). This meaning explains objections discussed by Lapp and Flood (1978: 299) about this sort of levelling of reading for comprehension which implies that there is a linear progression and hierarchal order of reading understanding processes: literal, inferential, and reflective processes. This in turn, ignores the interactive, simultaneous, and multiple processes students operate to construct the meaning from a text. The question now is: why this levelling? The goal beyond classification of these levelled processes is to help in determining targets of reading literacy for meaning, applying appropriate teaching methods, asking questions that are consistent with the desirable outcomes from the targeted process, and providing suitable opportunities that assist students to grasp read materials (Duffy & Roehler, 1993: 119; Rasslan, 2005: 142). Moreover, Lapp and Flood (1978: 299) point out that this levelling sheds light on the source of meaning in reading i.e. literal meaning extracted from text explicit information, inferential meaning extracted from text implicit information, and reflective

meaning extracted from connections between reader's prior knowledge and experience and text to develop or generate new and original ideas. A proper understanding can be constructed through interaction between text, teacher, and student within the classroom context (Ruddell & Unrau, 1994, 2004). The latter point leads the argument to discuss a very crucial issue which plays a major role in reading for meaning that is: schema theory.

Schema theory and reading literacy for meaning

The notion of mental organized information 'schema' that affects processing of new information is not entirely a new one (Garner, 1987: 6-7). It is originally used in philosophy by Immanuel Kant (1787) but, Sir Frederic Bartlett (1932)

> *is usually acknowledged as the first psychologist to use the term schema in the sense that it is used today, historical precedence must surely be given to the Gestalt psychologists (Anderson & Pearson, 1984: 255).*

Bartlett points out that memory is a constructive and a schematic in its nature rather than detailed. He finds out that the reader's prior knowledge and interests affect their information recalled from text, which is rearranged in their memories to fit their expectations (Garner, 1987: 6-7; Swales, 1990: 83). However, much of the work conducted about schema theory and its role in understanding and learning from text has been recent (Garner, 1987: 7). The burgeoning interest in schema theory has been developed in the 1970s influenced most notably by Anderson (1977, 1994, 2004), and his colleagues: Anderson and Others (1977), Freebody and Anderson (1981), Rumelhart (1976, 1981), Anderson and Pearson (1984), Adams and Collins (1985), and Bransford (1994, 2004).

The issue now is: what is the role of schema in understanding and how does it work? In this context, Anderson (2004) explains how readers' schemata or mental organized information could help in constructing meaning from a text. He states that

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according to the theory, a reader's schema, or organized knowledge of the world, provides much of the basis for comprehension, learning, and remembering the ideas in stories and texts (...) In schema-theoretic terms, a reader comprehends a message when he is able to bring to mind a schema that gives a good account of the objects and events described in the message (p. 594).

In the same vein and more detailed, Anderson (1994, 2004) suggests and advocates some theoretical functions of schema that would have on processing and understanding of texts as follows:

1. A schema provides reader with ideational scaffolding for assimilating text information i.e. the reader's schema provides a niche or slot, for certain text information, and hence information that fits a slot in the reader's schema is readily learned, perhaps with little mental effort.

2. It facilitates selective allocation of attention, that means a schema helps a reader to distinguish between important or relevant from unimportant or irrelevant information, and to pay more attention to important and relevant information.

3. It enables inferential elaboration. In other words, it provides the basis for making inferences and going beyond the explicit information or literal understanding of a text.

4. It allows orderly searches of memory. In other words, it provides a reader with a stock of mental organized structures of information that can be used and recalled when needed.

5. It facilitates editing, summarizing, or re-classifying information in new structures according to its relevance and significance.

6.   It permits inferential reconstruction i.e. it helps in generating hypotheses about the missing information or gaps and slots in a reader's schema, along with the specific text information that can be recalled.

In attempting to get an evidence of such functions, Steffensen, Joad-Dev, and Anderson (1979) provide us with evidence of the influence of the reader's schema on comprehension and memory by carrying out a cross-cultural research. The research was conducted on Indian and Americans who were requested to read and recall letters about Indian and American weddings following interpolated tasks. The results show that:

1. Subjects read the native passages more rapidly, and recalled a larger amount of information from the native passage. This implies that students are more likely to understand, learn, and recall text information that is related to their prior knowledge (Anderson, 1994, 2004).

2. Both, Indians and Americans, produced more culturally appropriate elaborations of the native passages. In the meantime, they produced more culturally based distortions of the foreign passage. This implies that students are more likely to give and produce different interpretations/understandings of culturally sensitive texts they encounter (Anderson, 1994, 2004). This in turn, draws attention to the role of an important perspective of prior knowledge that is: cultural schema (Pritchard, 1990).

3. Both recalled more important elements and information stated in passages whether these passages are native or foreign for them. Once more, this implies that students' prior knowledge help them in distinguishing between important/relevant information and unimportant/irrelevant (Anderson, 1994; 2004).

Another study, carried out by Singer and Donlan (1994), shows the effective role of a problem-solving schema with schema-general questions along with students' generation of story-specific questions. This sort of schematic instruction results in improving

reading literacy understanding and developing appropriate metacognitive processes for understanding of complex short stories. In addition, according to Bransford (1994, 2004) prior knowledge/schema is a fundamental aspect of the act of an understanding and recalling information of texts. A poor understanding or a weak recalling may appear because readers/students fail to activate their schema or have not appropriate prior knowledge that presupposed by a text. The idea is not entirely new since it is stressed by Smith (1976) as he points out that "nothing is comprehended if it does not reflect or elaborate upon what the reader already knows" (p. 8).

Students make their own interpretations in the light of their prior knowledge and consequently having different interpretations to the same text. Although, this reflects the importance of schema in reading literacy understanding, it raises a problem of 'mismatches' between different interpretations of the same text. These 'mismatches' could happen between students and text/intended meaning by authors or between students and teachers. These 'mismatches' have negative effects on readers as follows: students may form negative assumptions about their abilities as they can not comprehend. Teachers may erroneously conclude that students do not comprehend (Bransford, 1994; 2004). The issue now is: what could cause these mismatches/misunderstandings? Or in other words, what makes students fail to understand new information represented in the text in the light of their schema? Rumelhart (1981) explains three possibilities of misunderstanding a text or why students may fail to understand a text they encounter, these are:

1. *The reader may not have the appropriate schema. In this case, he/she simply can not understand the concept being communicated.*

2. *The reader may have the appropriate schemata, but the clues provided by the author may be insufficient to suggest them. Here again the reader will not understand the text but, with appropriate additional clues may come to understand it.*

3. *The reader may find a consistent interpretation of the text, but may not find the one intended by the author. In this case, the reader will*

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understand the text, but will misunderstand the author (Rumelhart, 1981: 28-29).

In the same vein, Bransford (1994, 2004) points out that students may lack the prior knowledge/schema necessary to understand a text at two levels. At one level, students may have no information about the new text. At another level, students have some knowledge about the new text, but still insufficient to comprehend many aspects of that texts. This explains what Garner (1987) points out that students come to understand a text when they have adequate schema. He indicates that

when the fit between old in-head information and new on-the-page information is good but not perfect, learning from text can occur and new schema can be developed. We can add pieces of information to an old schema (pp. 9-10).

It can be argued that this problem of mismatches/misunderstandings can be overcome or at least minimized. Since meaning is constructed through the interaction between teachers, students, and texts within the classroom context. They can share an understanding or a common understanding of a text although they have different interpretations/expectations as individuals (Ruddell & Unrau, 1994, 2004).

From another perspective, Bransford (1994, 2004) emphasises and shifts attention to schema construction along with schema activation. He posits that

many schema theorists have very little to say about the processes by which novel events are comprehended and new schemata are acquired (...) The point I [Bransford] want to emphasize is that the goal of this instruction is to help the child develop a more sophisticated schema rather than simply to activate a schema that already exists (Bransford, 2004: 611-612).

Bransford (1994, 2004) adds that teachers and authors need to provide students with appropriate and precise clues and additional information to construct and understand the relevance of new schema/new meanings and understandings rather than simply activate prior schema. In this vein, Rumelhart and Norman (1976) advocate three modes of

learning and acquisition of knowledge/schema and how this schema can be represented in memory as follows:

1. Accretion or build-up, where students have adequate prior schemata about the text/topic being read. In this case, it is easy for them to acquire, accumulate, or add new information to their memory schemata/structures.

2. Restructuring or creation, where students have inadequate prior schemata about the text/topic being read. This mode is the most difficult and significant one. Since students need to create and devise new memory schemata/structures to understand and fit new information into memory schemata. This happens mostly by patterns generation i.e. building new schemata based upon the patterns of old ones. Or at least by schema induction or learning by contiguity i.e. building new schemata by combing recurring patterns of old.

3. Tuning or adjusting, where students make some refinements of existing schemata. This can improve accuracy, generalization, or specifying of acquired information/prior schemata represented in the memory through using in different situations. Hence, experts more efficient than novice readers.

From a third angle, it can be argued that what students bring as a prior knowledge/schema involves different types of knowledges/schemata.

One type of schema, or background knowledge, a reader brings to a text is a content schema, which is knowledge relative to the content domain of the text. Another type is a formal schema, or knowledge relative to formal, rhetorical organizational structures of different types of texts (Carrell, 1987: 461).

In addition, there might be a cultural schema (Pritchard, 1990) or knowledge relative to values, beliefs, or culture. Different perspectives of schema/prior knowledge: content, formal, or cultural have been proved to be effective in improving understanding or recall information stated in a text (Steffensen, Joad-Dev & Anderson, 1979; Carrell, 1983, 1984, 1987; Pritchard, 1990).

The argument is that schema/prior knowledge plays a critical role in constructing meaning processes. To enable that role, students need help in activating, acquiring, or evolving their own schemata. In other words, constructing meaning process involves three interplayed phases: before, during, and after reading and students need to be taught how to plan, monitor, assess, or elaborate on their understanding. It is worth mentioning that two concepts are related to schema theory: script theory and social representation theory. The argument is that schemata represent generic concepts while scripts represent sequences of events or instructions to these concepts and social representations exemplify shared social meanings of these concepts and instructions (Byram, 1989).

3.1.2 Reading literacy fluency (RLF)

As far as reading literacy fluency (RLF) is concerned, it is critical to define what it involves. In this context,

> *fluent reading should involve accurate and automatic word recognition, with appropriate prosody or inflection. Each component affects comprehension in its own way (McKenna & Stahi, 2003: 72).*

RLF has three components which include: reading with accuracy; reading with automaticity; and reading with expression. The critical issue is the impact these components have on comprehension as will be indicated throughout discussion in this section. In other words,

> *fluent readers read silently, they recognize words automatically. They group words quickly to help them gain meaning from what they read. Fluent readers read aloud effortlessly and with expression. Their reading sounds natural, as if they are speaking. Readers who have not yet developed fluency read slowly, word by word. Their oral reading is choppy and plodding (NIFL, 2003: 22).*

RLF includes three crucial components; automatic and accurate word recognition with expression in oral reading. Eventually, RLF involves both forms of reading literacy:

silent reading literacy fluency and oral reading literacy fluency. In other words, silent fluency entails accuracy and automaticity whereas, oral fluency refers to accuracy, automaticity and expression in oral reading. It can be argued that automaticity theory as a component to RLF has been originated by Huey (1908) as it is implied from what he says:

repetition progressively frees the mind from attention to details, makes facile the total act, shortens the time, and reduces the extent to which consciousness must concern itself with the process (p. 104).

However, it is mostly associated with Samuels and his colleagues (LaBerge & Samuels, 1974; Samuels, 1976, 1994, 2004; Samuels & others, 1992; Nicholson & Tan, 1999; NIFL, 2003). They explain how far automatic word recognition affects understanding. In other words, automaticity has three components: attention, decoding, and meaning. Fluent students decode words automatically, accurately, and effortlessly without selective/conscious attention. They focus their attention primarily to constructing meaning from a text, whereas, less-fluent students focus their attention primarily to decoding words which makes them read slowly, effortfully, or less-accurately. This eventually affects their understanding negatively. What is explained by Samuels and his colleagues can be depicted in the following figure.

```
                    ┌─────────────────────────────┐
                    │        Automaticity          │
                    │                              │
                    └──────────────┬──────────────┘
              ┌────────────────────┴────────────────────┐
              ▼                                          ▼
┌──────────────────────────────┐        ┌──────────────────────────────┐
│  Less-fluent/automatic readers│        │   Fluent/automatic readers    │
│                               │        │                               │
└───────────────┬──────────────┘        └───────────────┬──────────────┘
                ▼                                        ▼
┌──────────────────────────────┐        ┌──────────────────────────────┐
│  Focus primarily on decoding  │        │  Focus primarily on meaning   │
│                               │        │                               │
└──────────────────────────────┘        └──────────────────────────────┘
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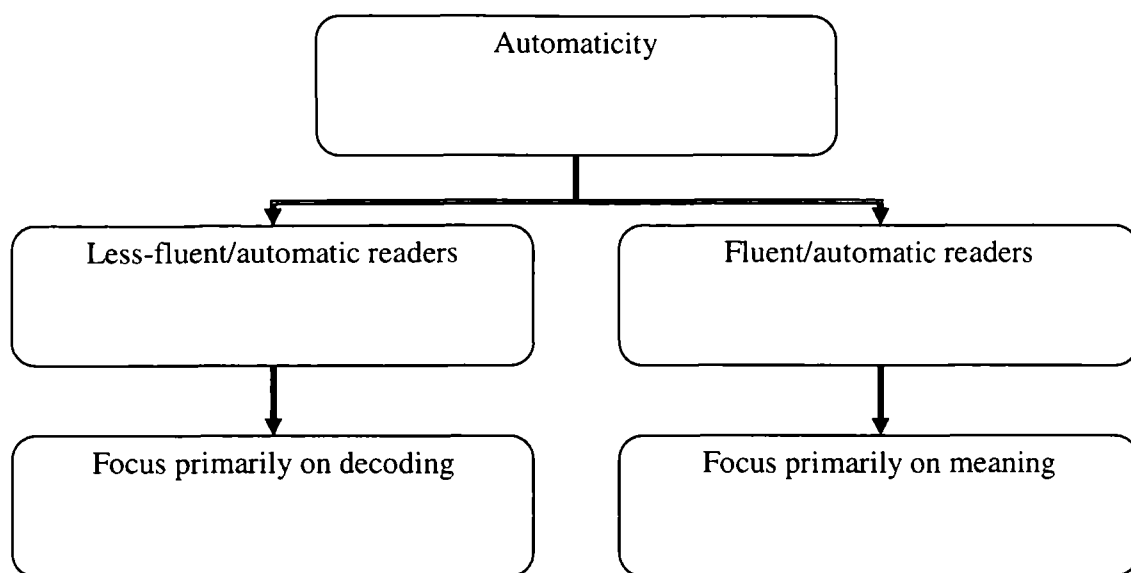
Figure 3.2: Automaticity as a component of RLF and its role in understanding.

The automatic word recognition frees cognitive resources and attention to constructing meaning from texts rather than decoding. In other words, fluency

> *bridges between word recognition and comprehension (...) Fluent readers recognize words and comprehend at the same time. Less fluent readers, however, must focus their attention on figuring out the words, leaving them little for understanding the text (NIFL, 2003: 22).*

This meaning is stressed by McKenna (2002) when he considers automaticity as the most critical component to RLF. He points out that

> *fluency is all about speed. The faster and more automatically one can decode words, the more mental resources become available for comprehension. It's a simple relationship (p. 25).*

In addition to automaticity, accuracy in word recognition is critical to RLF and hence to understanding. Fluent students need automatic and accurate word recognition in order to get a proper understanding of a text. In other words, automaticity without accuracy equals very little. This meaning is stressed by Spooner and others (2004) as they explain that decoding accuracy affects understanding since less-accurate students make some errors and eventually derive insufficient textual information which results in poor or low understanding. In addition to automatcity and accuracy, oral reading fluency involves inflection.

Prosody is the ability to read with some sort of inflection (...) We see prosody as an indicator that children are understanding the parts of speech in a sentence-in essence, a low-level type of comprehension (McKenna & Stahi, 2003: 72-73).

The question now is: to what extent, fluent readers need to be automatic, accurate, and expressive? In this vein, NIFL (2003: 27-29) explains how far accurate fluent readers should be? It can be calculated as follows: *One minute reading: total words read - errors = words correct per minute/accuracy.* Fluent students achieve 95%-100% accuracy (independent level: 1 word in 20 is difficult) in their word recognition. The less fluent students achieve 90% accuracy or lower (frustration level: more than 1 word in 10 is difficult). Children who achieve 90% - 94% accuracy (Instructional level: 1 word in 10 is difficult). Also, according to one published norm on how many accurate words readers can read per minute. First grade fluent students read about 60 w.p.m. correctly, 90-100 w.p.m. correctly by the second grade, and 114 w.p.m. correctly by the third grade (NIFL, 2003: 29). In the same vein, McKenna and Stahi (2003) and Harris and Sipay (1980) discuss reading levels referred to by Emmett Betts (1946): independent, instructional, and frustration levels. They explain how far accurate fluent/independent readers are in terms of their word recognition accuracy and understanding. Fluent/independent students read independently with 99% accuracy in word recognition and at least 99% understanding. Less fluent/frustrated students (frustration level) are likely to be frustrated even with support and, they read with 90% or less accuracy and with 50% or lower understanding. In addition, there are readers who read a text fluently

with support (instructional level). They read with 95-98% accuracy and with 75-89% understanding.

It seems from the foregoing discussion that independent reading and fluent reading are used interchangeable. However, it can be argued that fluency is a necessary condition to independent reading but not sufficient. In the meantime, fluent readers read independently. Independent reading involves the whole process of reading: planning and setting the purpose, constructing-meaning process, self-regulating ...etc while, fluency is one component to reading literacy process.

Regarding automaticity, the most widely used method of determining how automatic students are, is *'Words Per Minute' (W.P.M.)* (Harris & Sipay, 1980; White, 1995; Pinnell & Others, 1995; ETS, 1995; NIFL, 2003). The National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) in 1992 conducted a study on oral fluency at grade four. It explains how those students are automatic and accurate in their oral performance. It uses the total number of words per minute to refer to automaticity and the correct words per minute to refer to accuracy. It points out that fluent fourth graders read orally about 126-162 word per minute with 96-97% accuracy. Nonfluent read about 65-89 word per minute with 94% accuracy (White, 1995; Pinnell & Others, 1995; ETS, 1995). Another example, first grade fluent students read about 60 w.p.m., 90-100 w.p.m. by the second grade, and 114 w.p.m. by the third grade (NIFL, 2003).

It worth mentioning that there is no clear-cut point that explains how many words that fluent students can read per minute. Since this depends on many factors such as texts being read or students' purposes for reading. But the fact is that with practice the reading rate/speed is improved (Harris & Sipay, 1980). However, Harris and Sipay (1980) present an example of the rate that students achieve in their silent reading. This rate is calculated counting the median measure students get by using several standardized tests (seven tests for grades 2-3, eight tests for grades 4, 5, 6, 7, six tests for grades 8, 9, and three test for grade 12). The table below depicts these rates.

Table 3.1: Silent reading rates for different grades,

from Harris and Sipay (1980: 556)

Median	Grades								
values	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	12
Highest test	118	138	170	195	230	246	267	260	295
Median test	86	116	155	177	206	215	237	252	251
Lowest test	35	75	120	145	171	176	188	199	216

It can be noticed from the preceding discussion that there is no real difference between silent and oral reading in terms of the rate/the number of words read correctly per minute e.g. fluent fourth graders read orally about 126-162 word per minute as reported by NAEP in 1992 and they read about 155 word as reported by Harris and Sipay (1980) using the median measure. Also, it can be inferred there is tendency to stability in reading rate as students progress as the medians of grade nine and twelve indicate. To sum up this point,

> *a desirable criterion for fluency is (1) reading a passage at 100 words per minute with (2) zero or one insignificant errors and (3) adequate inflection (McKenna & Stahi, 2003: 77).*

In addition to automaticity and accuracy, fluent students need to be expressive in their oral reading. This can be judged by observing students while they read orally according to certain criteria. Some criteria developed by NAEP in 1992 by which students classified into four levels of oral fluency e.g. fluent readers read in larger and meaningful sentences, with expressive interpretation and some sort of inflection (White, 1995; Pinnell & Others, 1995; ETS, 1995; McKenna & Stahi, 2003). Automaticity and accuracy are necessary but not sufficient to RLF. Since, students may read words automatically and accurately in isolation but may read the same words less fluently in connected texts (NIFL, 2003: 23).

It seems from the foregoing discussion that fluency is being taught primarily in primary school. The issue arises here is: what is the point in discussing RLF for secondary school students? The argument is that

fluency is not a stage of development at which readers can read all words quickly and easily. Fluency changes, depending on what readers are reading, their familiarity with the words, and the amount of their practice with reading text. Even very skilled readers may read in a slow, laboured manner when reading texts with many unfamiliar words or topic (NIFL, 2003: 23).

Thus, teaching fluency need to be extended to involve secondary students who need to be taught and trained on reading fluently. At this stage, students need to read fluently different types of texts in different disciplines. To sum up, RLF should involve reading texts automatically, accurately, and expressively. It needs to be taught throughout primary education as well as in secondary education. Above all, RLF has a critical impact on constructing meaning of read texts (White, 1995; Pinnell & Others, 1995; ETS, 1995; McKenna & Stahi, 2003; Spooner & others, 2004).

The ability to read text effortlessly, quickly, accuaretly, and with expression plays an essential role in becoming a competent reader (Hasbrouck & Tindal, 2006:643)

Eventually, secondary students targeted in the present research need to be taught how to be fluent readers. In other words, students need to read different types of texts automatically, accurately, and with expression in oral performance. The following figure depicts components of RLF.
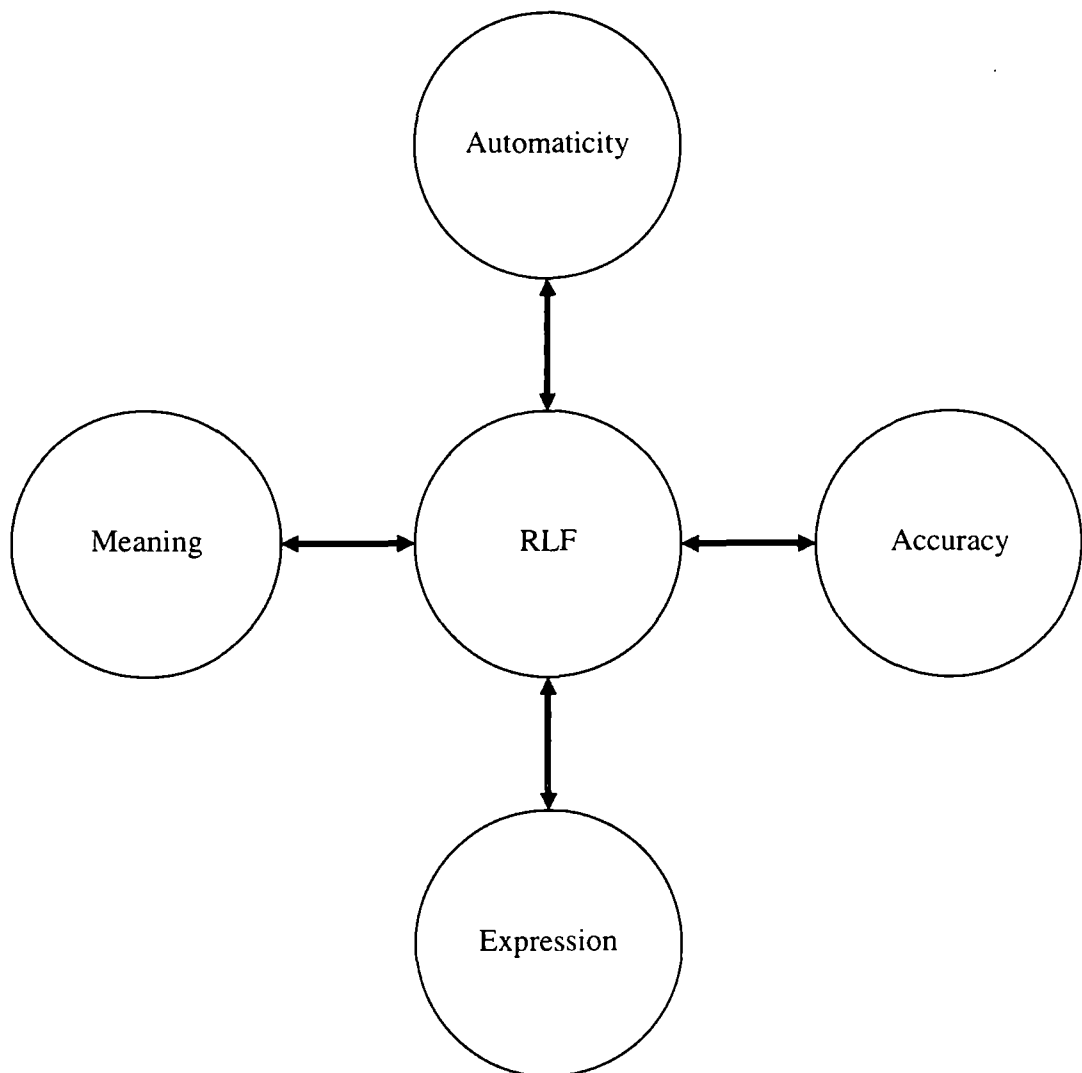
Figure 3.3: Components of reading literacy fluency

3.1.3 Strategic reading literacy (SRL)

First of all, what does it mean to be a strategic reader? It can be argued that to be a strategic reader is to

> *have knowledge of a broad range of strategies that you can apply to a number of different purposes and texts. In addition, if you are not achieving your purpose during reading, because the text is more difficult than you thought or for some*

other reason, you can adjust your strategies so that you do achieve those purpose (McKenna & Stahi, 2003: 190).

The preceding quote implies that SRL involves three crucial interrelated components these are:

1. Having knowledge of reading literacy strategies, purposes, and types of texts;
2. Having awareness of that knowledge;
3. Using this knowledge and awareness to fit and contrast between reading literacy strategy, purpose, or text. Be in a position to choose from strategic alternatives and change strategy, where appropriate, to fit the purpose or the text being read.

Strategic readers read for different purposes. They may read for information e.g. taking notes for exam purposes or seeking some information about a place they are going to visit. Others may read to perform a task e.g. read a manual to set up your new computer or reading instructions to conduct an experiment in the science laboratory. Some may read for recreation or literary experience e.g. reading a story or a poem in a leisure time (Mullis et al, 2004; NAGB, 2002). In addition, strategic readers may read for private/personal use, public use, for work, or for education (OECD, 2006). Of course, there is an overlap between reading purposes. However, it can be argued that when someone approaches a text to read, s/he has an initial purpose for reading. S/he may have a secondary purpose as well e.g. you may get meaning (initial purpose) and entertainment (secondary purpose) when you read a story for exam purposes.

On the other hand, strategic readers fit their reading literacy strategies to their purpose e.g. reading literacy for meaning involves some strategies to be employed to constructing a meaning of what is being read such as, anticipating meaning of a text, using the context clues, or analyzing information stated in a text critically. Another example, meta-meaning includes some other strategies to be used such as judging one's own understanding of a text against his/her purposes for reading. Actually, there is evidence that 10[th] grade students adjust their strategic processing to the study-related

purposes for which they read expository texts at school (Braten & Samuelstuen, 2004). However,

empirical knowledge about how reading purpose influences the use of different types of strategies during reading is still limited (p. 325).

In addition, strategic readers adjust and vary their strategies to fit their purpose and the type of text they read. They may use skimming strategy if their purpose is to get a gist of a text or to review a familiar story. Or they may use scanning if they need to get a specific piece of information stated in a text or to read a story primarily for the plot. Also, they may use normal rate, as discussed above, to construct deep understanding of a text or to appreciate value and beauty of literary style. They may adapt careful rate if they want to analyze or judge information or style stated in a text (Harris & Sipay, 1980: 552-553; Al-Naqua & Hafez, 2002: 220; Buzan, 2003; Younis, 2005). It is worth mentioning that using reading strategies rather than skills implies that students read in a flexible, consciously, and reasoning way when they encounter a certain text. Thus, the researcher adopts the term reading strategies rather than reading skills, and this meaning is stressed by Pearson and others (1992), and Duffy and Roehler (1993).

Furthermore, strategic readers adjust and fit their reading strategy to the type of text they read. In other words, they are aware of different types of texts and know how to fit their strategy to suit the type of text being read. There are different types of texts and each of which has its own structure, style, and purpose, such as information, persuasion, argument, reviews, explanation, narrative, or instructions text (Green, 2006). For example, strategic readers expect that a fiction story has its own distinct structure i.e. plot, events, characters, place, or time. They are also aware that it has its own style and literary language. These types of texts will be discussed later when discussing the reading literacy content (See chapter four).

In addition, strategic readers adjust their stance/focus attention to the purpose and to the type of text they encounter. Strategic readers adopt a stance along the efferent-aesthetic continuum (Rosenblatt, 1994, 2004; Many, 1994, 2004; Ruddell & Unrau, 1994, 2004).

A particular stance determines the proportion or mix of public and private elements of sense that fall within the scope of the reader's selective attention (Rosenblatt, 2004: 1372).

At the one end of stance continuum, the predominantly efferent stance refers to that sort of reading in which readers focus their attention on information to be elicited, retained, and recalled from the text after reading event. At the other end of the continuum, the predominantly aesthetic stance refers to that kind of reading in which readers pay attention to lived through experience during reading. Aesthetic readers experience feelings, ideas, situations, scenes, style, or tensions (Rosenblatt, 1994; 2004). It is worth noting that the word 'predominantly' implies that strategic readers may adapt mainly one stance and in the meantime, they adopt subordinate stance e.g. they may adopt aesthetic stance in reading a poem and they may also get some factual information to be retained. Any kind of reading involves both stances and falls in a certain point in that continuum. (ibid, 1994, 2004). Actually, the reading stance promotes motivation and focusing attention to reading and in the meantime, is influenced by the type of texts being read and teachers as well (Ruddell & Unrau, 1994, 2004).

To sum up, the curriculum of reading needs to consider strategic reading as a main target. In other words, secondary students need to be taught how to be strategic readers who have a knowledge, awareness, and capability of adjusting their reading strategies to their purposes and the type of text they read. The following figure depicts components to SRL.
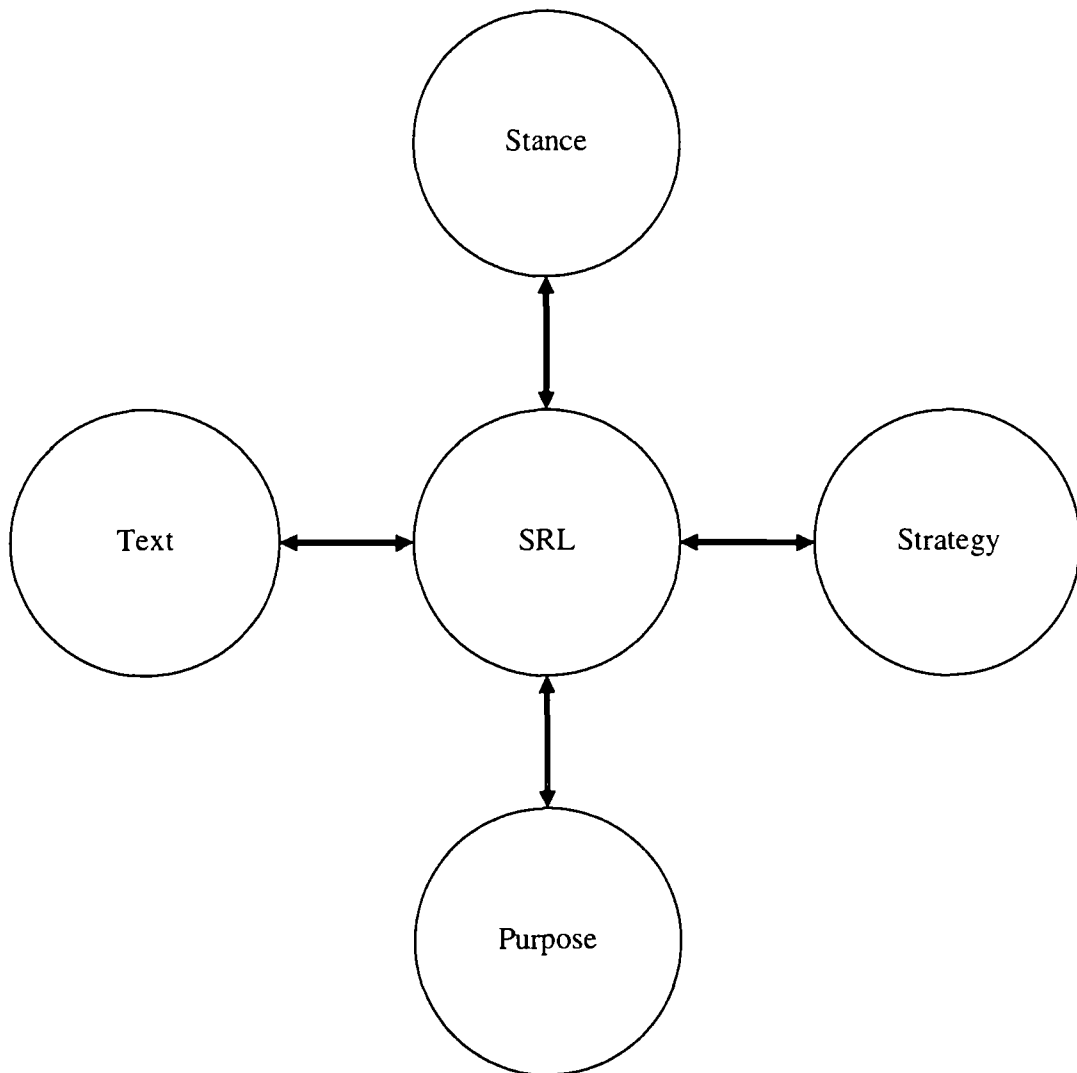
Figure 3.4: Components of SRL

3.1.4 Reading Literacy Engagement (RLE)

Following a historical review and classification of reading literacy research and practice eras since the 1950s, Alexander and Fox (2004) state that the current era (1996-present) is the 'era of engagement'. It can be argued that

> *a successful reading program must not only develop children who can read, but*
> *also children who do read. Two major objectives of any total reading program*

should be to build a lasting interest in reading and improve reading tastes. A
good reading program must create the desire to read and help the individual to
find pleasurable recreation in reading. It also should foster the desire to read for
personal development, to learn more about the world, and to gain increasing
understanding of people and society (Harris & Sipay, 1980: 515).

Developing RLE is a critical target of any reading literacy curriculum and this need has become more important for secondary school students, since broadly speaking, students' motivation decreases as they progress from primary to secondary school (Otis, Grouzet, & Pelletier, 2005; Gottfried, Fleming, & Gottfried, 2001). More precisely, the motivation for reading literacy declines while the motivation for social life and interpersonal relationships rises (Antonio & Guthrie, 2008). Thus, instruction needs to use rising interest in social life and interpersonal relationships in promoting reading motivation (ibid, 2008) as will be explained in the following chapter (See chapter four, strategies for reading literacy instruction).

There are some key concepts that shape and direct students' affective response to reading literacy. These are: attitudes, interests, preferences, motivation, or involvement. However, it is more practical and concrete to use all these concepts to refer to RLE rather than drifting in defining each of which. Thus, the researcher intends to use the term of 'reading literacy engagement' (RLE) to refer to reading literacy attitudes, interests, preferences, motivation, or involvement. In this context, McKenna and Stahi (2003) state that

attitudes are learned. They are not innate but develop over time as the result of
cultural forces and our own day to day experiences with reading and books. The
more positive these forces are, the more likely it is that a child will become a
lifelong reader (...) an interest area is really an attitude toward reading about a
particular topic (pp. 204-205).

In addition, Guthrie (2008: 99) posits that motivation refers to "students' interests, desire to learn, and commitment toward reading".

It can be argued that in social psychology, attitude is viewed and widely accepted and advocated as a tri-component concept: evaluative perspective as a cognitive component, feeling perspective as an affective component, and action readiness perspective as a conative component (Mathewson, 1994, 2004). The critical question which arises in this context is: what shapes and influences students' reading attitudes? In this vein, many researchers (e.g. Mathewson, 1994, 2004; McKenna, 1995), present models to represent what attitude theory reveals about how these attitudes are acquired and in turn, influence reading. Mathewson (1994, 2004) explains that attitude toward reading is a tri-component, as stated above, feelings about reading, action readiness to reading, and beliefs about reading. This attitude influences and forms the intention to reading or continuing reading. In fact, the intention is mediated between attitude and reading since students may have a positive attitude toward reading but, they may be demotivated to read, as their intention is influenced by their internal emotional state or external motivators (incentives, purposes, norms, settings). McKenna and Others (1995) criticise Mathewson's model as it explains attitude toward reading during reading activity not on long-term bases. Therefore, McKenna and Others (1995) and McKenna and Stahi (2003) posit that attitude toward reading is shaped and influenced by three synergistic factors: students' specific reading experiences, beliefs about the outcomes of reading, and the normative beliefs or how influential people feel about reading e.g. parents and teachers.

Following a discussion about reading literacy interests throughout different grade-levels from primary to secondary school, Harris and Sipay (1980) conclude an important point regarding reading literacy interests that is

the tremendous range of individual differences both in amount of voluntary reading and in the specific interests expressed. Even in a group of children who are similar in intelligence, age, and cultural background, the range of individual preferences is tremendous. While knowledge of the general trends is helpful to

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teachers in allowing them to anticipate the interests of pupils, it does not relieve
them of the responsibilities of trying to discover the particular interests of each
pupil (p. 518).

This quote implies two major points related to RLE that a reading literacy curriculum for secondary school students needs to consider:

1. What are general trends in RLE?
2. What are the specific differences/interests among students in RLE?

Regarding to general trends in RLE, Guthrie (b2008) elicits seven key principles from reviewing theory and evidence about students' motivation and how they may or not get engaged in reading literacy activity. These principles are as follows:

1. The classroom context is critical since the teachers' actions or the specific reading materials influences students' motivation.

2. Situational motivation is significant as interest develops with a very concrete and immediate beginning. Interest develops throughout four stages which exemplify the initial motivation for reading under a certain circumstances, focusing attention on a certain topic over a period of time, then extending this attention and seeking repeated opportunities over a period of time, and displaying higher interests in reading (Guthrie et al, 2006).

3. Motives/reasons for reading literacy move from outside to inside. This in turn, highlights the role of teachers as outsiders influencing of RLE. In this vein, students can be classified on six points of a spectrum from internally motivated to resistant to motivation. At the positive extreme, students read because they are intrinsically motivated i.e. reading for enjoyment or reading for ownership or for the sake of reading itself. At another level, students may be externally motivated to read i.e. reading for success or reading for grades. At a third level, they may lack motivation/amotivation i.e. reading with apathy. At the negative extreme, students are demotivated to read i.e. resistance to or avoidance of reading.

4. Unlike the predominant belief that external motivation direct students' achievement, the internal motivation drives achievement and powers students' academic accomplishment.

5. General motivation for reading is stable and consistent over the time.

6. A global internal motivation decline across time which requires teachers' and school's support to boost students' motivational development.

7. In terms of cause and effect, students' motivation and achievement are interconnected, synergistic, and spur each other but motivation leads as students advance in school.

In the same vein, Guthrie (a2008; b2008), McKenna and Stahi (2003), McKenna and others (1995), McKenna (1986), and Harris and Sipay (1980) refer to some observations about reading attitudes or interests. These observations need to be considered when designing the curriculum of reading literacy for secondary school students:

1. Reading attitudes declines over time.
2. The scope of interests declines as students grow up.
3. Reading attitudes get worse more rapidly for poor readers.
4. Girls tend to have more positive attitudes than boys have.
5. Teaching can positively influence attitudes.
6. Broadly speaking, boys' interests involve science, invention, action/adventure, sports, or machines whereas, girls' interests include romance, stories of home and school life, and interpersonal relationship.
7. Females tend to read or share boy's books/interests rather than males do with girls' books/interests.
8. Regardless of reading ability or gender, students are strongly interested in reading humour, animal, and unusual materials.
9. The influence of sex increases with age.

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10. Reading attitudes are not strongly influenced by ethnic group membership in itself.

With respect to the specific reading literacy interests or preferences, it can be argued that although there are general trends of reading attitudes, there are tremendous differences between students' interests and preferences (Harris & Sipay, 1980). The issue now is: how can these interests and preferences be developed? This point will be discussed later in the following chapter (See chapter four, strategies for reading literacy instruction).

Why RLE is required? In other words, what is the importance of attitudes to reading literacy? In this vein, Guthrie and Others (1994, 2004) stress that reading literacy motivation increases reading amount (i.e. spending more time reading different types of materials). This in turn, increases an understanding of a text. In fact, Guthrie and his colleagues discuss and show evidence how increasing reading amount affects text understanding. Reading amount mediates between motivation and understanding by enlarging and enriching students' prior knowledge, raising reading efficacy, improving fluency in using cognitive/understanding strategies or processes, and raising the harmony in matching between reading cognitive processes and motivational goals or purposes for reading. Also, Guthrie and others (2004), Anderson and Guthrie (1996), and Guthrie and Others (1996) explain that combining motivation support with strategy instruction (Concept-Oriented Reading Instruction-CORI) results in improving of reading understanding, reading motivation, and reading strategies/strategic reading.

To conclude, to develop secondary students reading literacy attitudes, interests, and motivation for reading is a very critical target of a reading literacy curriculum. It can be argued that all targets discussed above are one facet of reading literacy and the other facet is meta-reading literacy. In other words, how students plan, monitor, assess, or develop their reading. The answer will be shaped throughout the following section.

3.1.5 Meta-reading Literacy

The critical question arises in this context is: how students can regulate consciously their constructing-meaning process when they read? In other words, what might help students in planning, monitoring, assessing, and develop their reading? For more details, what might raise students' awareness of how they read? Why they read? And what they get from a text? In addition, to what extent they are aware of breakdowns or blockages to meaning occur, and how they can resolve them then, direct their understanding to achieve their purposes from reading? All these questions can be answered through discussing the other face of reading literacy process that is the 'meta-reading process'. Meta-reading, in the present research, is concerned with students' awareness of constructing-meaning processes. This awareness involves three phases: self-planning, self-monitoring, and self-evaluation. This will be discussed in the following section. The reason behind using 'meta-reading' rather than 'metacognition' is the latter has a broader sense while the former is relevant to and concerned with awareness of constructing-meaning process concerned in the present research.

The argument is that metacognition is an umbrella word that involves awareness of and self-regulating one's own thinking. 'Meta-reading', on the other hand, is that part of metacognition that applies to constructing-meaning process. This meaning referred to by Nicholson (1999). He explains that

> *the meta means 'knowledge about'. Metacognition refers to knowledge about how the mind works. It involves the ability to reflect on and control one's own thought processes. The part of metacognition that is of interest to us is meta-comprehension, this is the part that applies to reading comprehension (p. 138).*

However, to understand what 'meta-reading' involves, it is worth discussing what 'metaconition' pertains to. It can be argued that the burgeoning interest in 'metacognition' or 'cognitive monitoring' was in the late 1970s mostly associated with Flavell (1979) and his associates: Baker (1979), Baker and Brown (1980), Kotsonls and Patterson (1980), Baker and Anderson (1981), Baumann and Others (1993), McLain

(1993), Karabenick (1993), and Efklides (2006). In this context, Flavell (1979) presents a model for metacognition components and he explains how far these components interact with each other.
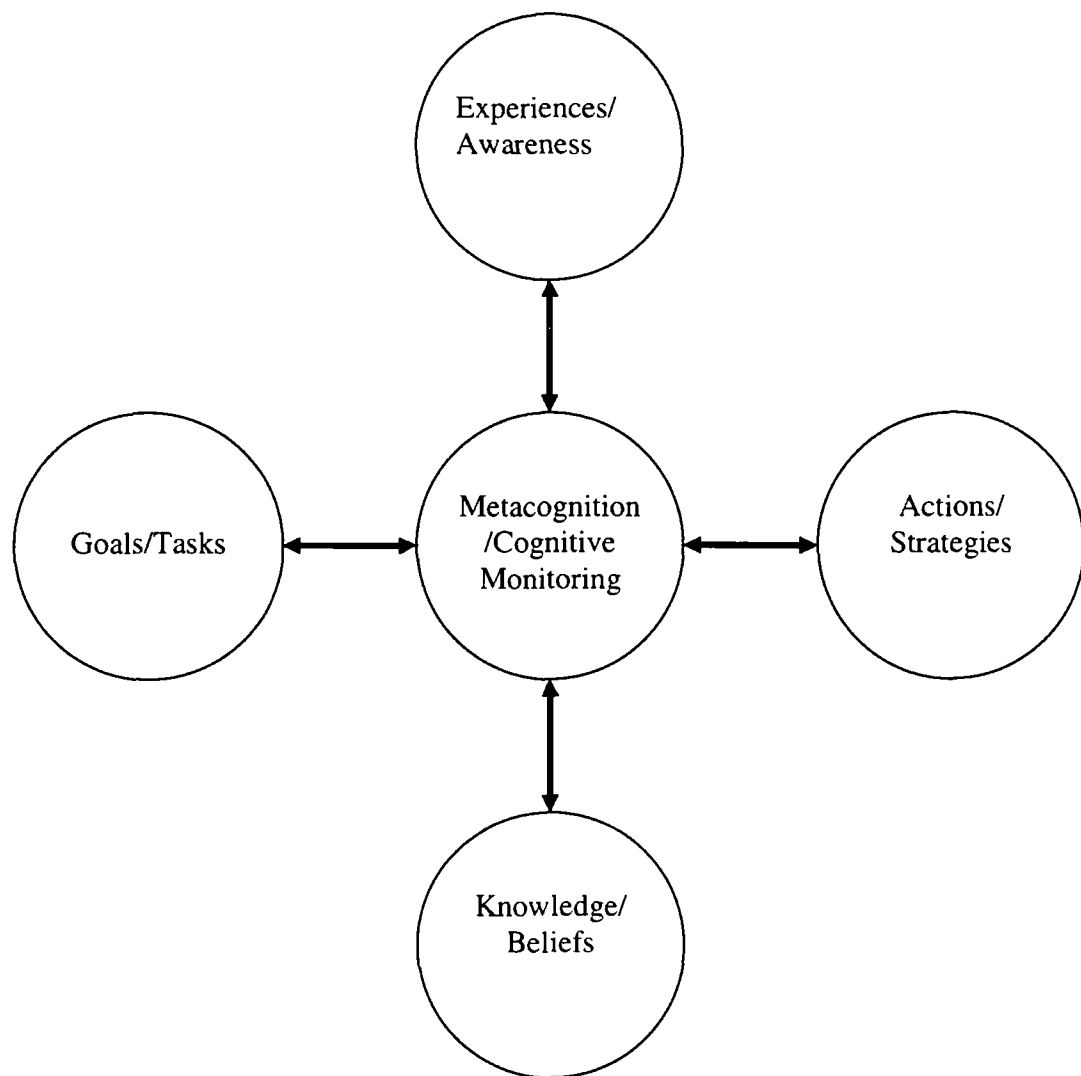
Figure 3.5: Flavell's model of metacognition/cognitive monitoring

According to Flavell (1979) metacognition/cognitive monitoring comprises of four interplaying components. Firstly, 'metacognitive knowledge' (MK) which refers to beliefs, knowing, or a database about the other three components in the model: students as cognitive processors, their goals or tasks, and actions or strategies they use. Secondly,

metacognitive experience (ME) which refers to students' awareness of and consciousness of their cognitive process/thinking and where they are and what kind of progress they make or are likely to make. This sort of conscious knowledge/awareness is critical for learning and understanding, since it invokes students to raise new goals/tasks or revise or abandon old ones as they learn. Also, it encourages students to activate actions/strategies to be taken to achieve cognitive or metacognitive goals/tasks. Eventually, this can affect MK by adding, revising, or deleting from it according to observing relationships among ME, goals/tasks, or actions/strategies.

As far as meta-reading is concerned in the present research, the question now is: what does this meta-reading involve? Fitzgerald (1983) answers this question as she says:

> *meta-comprehension refers to readers' awareness and self-control of their understanding and of strategies that facilitate comprehension (p. 249).*

She translates this sort of awareness and self-control into four critical aspects. These are: students show they know what they know or what they do not know; students know what it is they need to know; and students know the usefulness of intervention strategies. Furthermore, Standifford (1984: 2) goes with Fitzgerald (1983) as she indicates that "meta-comprehension, then, is the awareness of and conscious control over one's own understanding or lack of it", and she divides students according to their comprehension and meta-comprehension into four groups. On the one hand, students are highly aware of their understanding when their meta-comprehension reflects and matches accurately what they understand, and this happens when students understand and are aware of that they understand. Or they do not understand and realize they do not. On the other hand, students are less or unaware of their understanding when their meta-comprehension reveals misunderstanding/mismatching and this happens if they understand but think they do not. Or they do not understand but think they do.

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Comprehension

High ←――――――→ Low

	High comprehension	Low comprehension
High Meta-comprehension	Students know and are aware that they know	They do not know and realize they do not
Low	Students know but think they do not know	They do not know but think they do
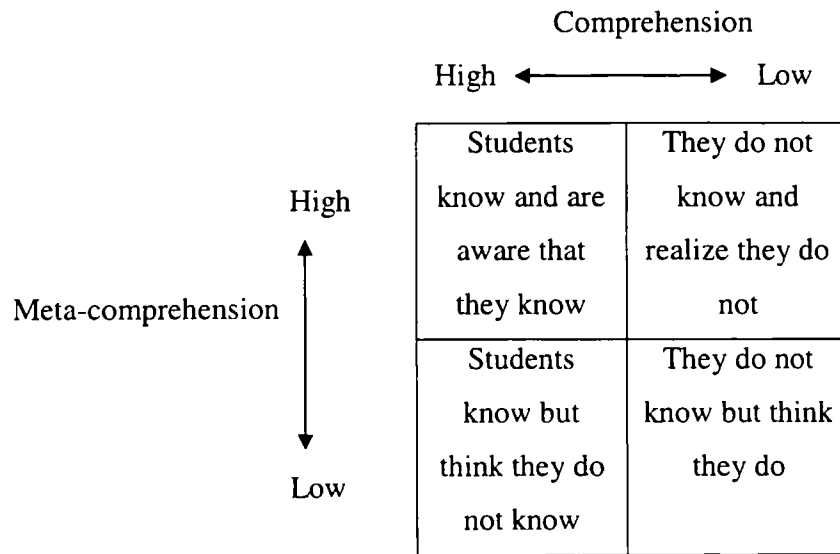
Figure 3.6: Aspects of meta-comprehension, from Standiford (1984: 4)

It is worth mentioning that it seems from the foregoing discussion that reading literacy researchers are concerned with awareness, monitoring or self-control of comprehension. It can be argued that the reason behind that is comprehension is seen as the essence of reading as stated above. Also, it may be because of metacognition is born from the cognitive psychology womb as can be understood from Flavell (1979), which may implies that metacognition is about cognitive process and then, it is about comprehension as a cognitive process. However, the researcher uses the term 'meta-reading' rather than meta-comprehension to broaden the horizons of metacognition in reading literacy. In other words, meta-comprehension may convey the notion that it is concerned with only monitoring understanding. Whereas, meta-reading is concerned with reading literacy as a whole; reading for meaning; reading fluency; strategic reading; reading literacy engagement; or reading literacy assessment. In other words, meta-reading exemplifies the awareness, planning, self-regulating, and self-assessment of the whole reading process. For instance, students need to be aware of their interests and how to meet them; or they need to be aware of their purposes for reading and how to achieve them.

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This raises the question of what is the role of meta-reading in the reading literacy process. In this regard, Nicholson (1999: 138) refers to the fact that meta-reading is critical for raising awareness of and consciousness of understanding success or failure, and how to solve blockages to meaning and regulate understanding to get the proper meaning of a text. In addition, Duffy and Roehler (1993) argue that reading literacy is a meta-reading process since

> *the goal is to make students conscious of reasoning employed by self-regulated readers. You want (teacher) students to know how to activate background knowledge and make predictions as they begin to read; you want them to monitor their meaning getting and employ strategies if blockages to meanings occur while reading; you want students to organize and evaluate what they read once they finish (p. 173-174).*

In practice, teaching meta-reading is proved to be effective as a predictor of reading understanding in third, fifth, and eighth primary grades (Kolic-Vehovec & Bajsanski, 2001).

In short, meta-reading process involves planning, monitoring, regulating, and evaluating reading activity. According to Duffy and Roehler (1993) it has three major processes: initiating processes that students employ as they begin to read e.g. making predictions, using text clues, activating prior knowledge, or setting purposes. During-reading processes that students access as they are in the middle of reading in order to check and , if necessary, to modify initial predictions e.g. monitoring blockages to meaning and using appropriate processes to solve them, or making new predications as they read and checking them to get the proper meaning of a text. Post-reading processes that students access as they reflect on own their reading e.g. critical analysis of information stated in a text being read. Furthermore, they emphasize that these meta-reading processes require instruction to raise students' consciousness of what, why, how to read and construct meaning from texts. In addition, these processes involve strategic thinking which makes

them "flexible plans for constructing meaning, not proceduralized routines to be memorized" (Duffy & Roehler. 1993: 165).

To sum up this point, the secondary school students need to be taught about reading or awareness of their reading purpose, processes, or interests. Also, they need to be taught how to regulate their reading and how to search for alternatives where appropriate, to achieve their purposes from reading or not.

In a nutshell, to conclude the discussion above regarding RLT, secondary school students in Egypt need to be taught five broad targets. In other words, a reading literacy curriculum design should address five critical targets as follows:

1. Reading literacy for meaning, where students construct literal, inferential, or reflective meanings from texts they read, and how they relate such meanings to their prior knowledge.

2. Reading literacy fluency, where students read texts automatically, accurately, with appropriate inflection in oral performance.

3. Strategic reading literacy, where students fit their reading strategy, rate, or stance to the purpose for reading or the type of text being read.

4. Reading literacy engagement, where students' attitudes to and interests in reading are developed.

5. Above all, meta-reading literacy, where students plan, monitor, and assess their reading literacy.

The issue now is: how can these targets be assessed and more precisely improved. This leads the argument to discuss reading literacy assessment in the following section.

3.3 Reading Literacy Assessment (RLA)

It can be argued that assessment is a critical and an integral component of any curriculum of reading literacy. It is worth reminding the reader that the main concern of RLA, in the present research, is improving students' reading literacy. Without drifting into defining and differentiating between relative terms in this context such as, evaluation, assessment, or measurement, to explain what RLA is, it is very useful to map the road. In other words, the researcher intends to clarify some critical issues regarding RLA in the present research context. These are: what theoretical frameworks that underpin and shape the view of RLA; why RLA or what its purposes are; how to conduct RLA or what its forms and strategies are. All these issues will be addressed throughout the following discussion.

For clarity and consistency purposes, on the one hand, all these terms are used interchangeably: authentic assessment, alternative assessment, dynamic assessment, formative assessment, assessment for reading, responsive assessment, performance assessment, interactive assessment, integrative assessment, informal assessment, project assessment, or process-oriented assessment. The argument is that all these concepts convoy the notion that the function of assessment is promoting learning and informing instruction rather than making general judgements for the sake of accountability, success, or grades. In contrast, these sorts of judgments can be carried out by static assessment, traditional assessment, conventional assessment, standardized assessment, summative assessment, assessment of reading, formal assessment, or product-oriented assessment.

The researcher intends to use the term 'strategic assessment'. The reason behind this choice is that strategic assessment is compatible. In other words, it may be a dynamic, an authentic, a formative assessment ... etc. Or, on the other hand, it may be a static, or a summative assessment ... etc. It is meant to fit the purpose of the assessment whether it is to inform instruction, promote learning, grading and success, or for accountability. The features of 'strategic assessment' will be shaped in the following discussion.

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3.2.1 Theoretical frameworks underpinning RLA

Regarding the first issue, what theoretical framework underpins and shapes the recent views of RLA? McKenna and Stahi (2003) stress that

> *all reading assessment is based on a model (...) Without a model, a reading specialist has no way of making sense of the observations derived from the assessment battery (p. 2).*

It is very critical to have a theoretical framework and to work accordingly. Otherwise, the assessors may lose their right way in assessing their students. Since a framework/model represents and sets forth useful information about how to assess, what to assess or assessment scope, what the best way to help students to improve their performance or overcome struggles, and more important how to interpret and use the data derived from the assessment to inform reading literacy instruction.

This meaning is stressed by McKenna and Stahi (2003) as they point out the potentiality of a model for RLA since

> *the model helps the reading specialist recognize patterns in the data, determine the course of instruction, identify the child's strengths, and identify which aspects of reading knowledge are obstructing the child with reading problems. A model should provide a roadmap, a set of directions to help the reading specialist navigate the assessment procedure and provide guidelines for interpretation. Not every child needs to receive every assessment. An effective model helps you determine which measures may best inform you about the child's needs (p. 2).*

However, Valencia and Pearson (1986) argue that reading assessment models have not reflected what theory and practice reveal about reading literacy process for a long time. RLA needs to be in consistency with and based upon new trends in reading literacy theory and practice. Without this matching between assessment strategies and the

reading literacy process, we could not measure what we teach and hence, we could not make right decisions regarding students' reading literacy ability. This meaning is stressed by Sangster and Overall (2006: 8) "it is possible to argue that formative assessment has never been strongly part of traditional assessment methods".

In creating and making a consistency and congruence between assessment and what theory and practice reveal about reading literacy, many models are developed. In this context, McKenna and Stahi (2003) refer to different RLA models: the deficit model or remedial model which is concerned with struggling readers. Teachers need to diagnose their students' reading difficulty and develop appropriate remedial or interventional instruction to help those students. In addition to caring about readers' problems, the contextual model is concerned with matching between students' needs and what instruction offers to meet those needs, and how the broader context affects reading literacy performance e.g. family status. A third wave of stage models are concerned with mapping different developmental stages of reading literacy development. This could be useful in knowing what to assess or the scope of assessment at each developmental stage.

In fact, McKenna and Stahi (2003) advocate 'the cognitive model'. This model emphasises that RLA needs to reflect different components of reading literacy i.e. understanding, fluency (automaticity, accuracy, and expression), strategic reading literacy (fitting reading strategy to reading purpose), and language comprehension (vocabulary, text structure, and prior knowledge). This model refers to a very crucial point relative to RLA that is: it needs to reflect what theory reveals about the components of reading literacy process. In other words, any RLA should be concerned with the components of reading literacy targeted in the reading curriculum in question.

In this vein, Valencia and Pearson (1986) develop a model for RLA. This model is consistent with strategic view of reading literacy, which

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deemphasizes the notion of that progress toward expert reading is guided by the aggregation of component reading skills. Instead, it suggests that at all levels of sophistication, from kindergarten to research scientist, readers use available resources (e.g. prior knowledge, environment clues, and potential helpers) in order to make sense of the text at hand (p. 4).

This view of reading literacy comes in agreement with the constructive and interactive model of reading literacy process adopted in the present research (See chapter two, interactive models). Furthermore, Valencia's and Pearson's model (1986) emphasises and considers the relationship between: targets, decision-making units, and methods of assessment. Moreover, it is a tri-component featured as follows:

1. The assessed reading literacy attributes should reflect a theoretically sound model of the reading literacy process. In the present research, Ruddell's and Unrau's (1994, 2004) interactive model has been adopted as explained in chapter two.

2. The assessed reading literacy attributes/processes are highly interdependent and then can not be assessed discretely.

3. Whatever is worthy of assessment ought to be assessable in different contexts for different purposes using a variety of strategies, but, the consistency is required at all levels of assessment: at the district, school, classroom, and individual level.

In addition, this model emphasises a critical issue regarding RLA that is: the dynamism of assessment. In other words, strategic assessment is an integral part of instruction.

The best possible assessment of reading would seem to occur when teachers observe and interact with students as they read authentic texts for genuine purposes (Valencia & Pearson, 1986: 6).

This view of RLA is in congruence with what is referred to as 'dynamic assessment' which is influenced by the notion of the Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD) developed by Vygotsky (1896-1934) (Campione & Brown, 1985; Shaughnessy, 1993). Vygostky argues that ZPD is the distance between what students can learn independently and what they can learn with adults or capable peers' guidance.

It is the distance between the actual developmental level as determined by independent problem solving and level of potential development as determined by problem solving under adult guidance or in collaboration with more capable peers (Vygotsky, 1978: 86).

Dynamic assessment

provides data about an individual's cognitive strategies and responsiveness to instruction, and information about what kinds of instruction might be valuable for the individual. Any type of dynamic assessment includes a session of instruction. Typically, an individual is pre-tested on a task, is given instruction on how to do the task, and then is post-tested on the task (Bednar & Kletzien, 1990: 4).

In a sense, the essence of dynamic assessment is to prompt learning and inform instruction. Teachers intervene to aid students, who are likely to learn with some sort of help, to achieve the assessed attributes/targets rather than leaving students to fail and/or reveal unaided level of competence as a result of static assessment. This in turn affects negatively their current and future performance (Campione & Brown, 1985; Valencia & Pearson, 1986; Spector, 1992). It can be argued that there are some theoretical strands that contribute to develop the dynamic assessment, chief among them:

1. The evolution of a strategic, constructive, and interactive view of reading literacy as a dynamic construction-meaning process as a result of interaction between students, teachers, texts within the classroom context (Valencia & Pearson, 1986; Bednar & Kletzien, 1990; Ruddell & Unrau, 1994, 2004).

2. The evolution of the Vygotskyan thoughts about learning and development, who introduces the notion of ZPD as discussed above. This in turn, results in an evolving dynamic model (Vygotsky, 1978; Campione & Brown, 1985; Bednar & Kletzien, 1990).

This sort of interactive assessment has proved to be effective in predicting students learning and transferring their learning to novel situations. Moreover, it has superiority over static or standardized testing for planning for instruction (Campione & Brown, 1985; Spector, 1992). Also, Bednar and Kletzien (1990) point out that dynamic assessment procedures (DAP) has proved to be valuable for 'at risk' readers at high school, since it

provides a means of understanding readers' strengths, weaknesses, preferred strategies, and ability to accept and apply new strategies (pp. 15-16).

In addition, authentic assessment has proved to be effective in improving reading understanding (Cross, Greer & Pearce, 1998). Furthermore, Clarke (2005) presents a model of formativeness in RLA. In her model, she emphasises that formative assessment is mainly aiming at enabling and promoting learning and therefore, it is assessment for learning rather than measuring attainment as is the case in the summative assessment. In addition, this model stresses very important points regarding RLA such as students' involvement in assessment process; sharing assessment criteria with students; reflecting and being conducted against pre-defined targets in the reading literacy curriculum; or raising students' self-efficacy and potentiality to learning and achieving. This model has seven components as follows:

1. *clarifying learning objectives and success criteria at the planning stage, as a framework for formative assessment processes;*
2. *sharing learning objective and success criteria with students, both long term and for individual lessons;*

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3. *appropriate and effective questioning which develops the learning rather than attempts to measure it;*

4. *focusing oral and written feedback, whether from teacher or student, around the development of learning objectives and meeting of targets;*

5. *organizing targets so students' achievement is based on previous achievement as well as aiming for the next step (ipsative referencing);*

6. *involving students in self-and peer evaluation;*

7. *raising students' self-efficacy and holding a belief that all students have the potential to learn and to achieve (Clarke, 2005: 2-3).*

In the same vein, Harrison, Bailey, and Dewar (1998), and Harrison, Bailey, and Foster (1998) emphasise chiefly students' responsiveness, engagement, or interaction in the assessment process and authenticity of assessment tasks or assessing students while they read authentic texts for genuine purposes in read situations. So, they point out that RLA needs to consider the following issues:

1. Informing instruction, and helping students to learn within the classroom context.

2. Teacher assessment, self-assessment, and peer assessment.

3. Authenticity of the task which form the basis of reading assessment;

4. Taking a greater account of the students' response especially through interviews;

5. Needing to be based on a variety of methods with negotiating these methods with students themselves.

6. Devaluing the authority of the author and of the text, and encouraging the student's engagement as motivated, purposeful, and constructor of meaning from texts.

Summing up the previous discussion, the Assessment Reform Group (ARG) (2002) in the United Kingdom sets forth ten major research-based principles that characterize practicing of 'assessment for learning' within the classroom context. It portrays assessment for learning as

the process of seeking and interpreting evidence for use by learners and their teachers to decide where the learners are in their learning, where they need to go and how best to get there (p. 2).

It points out the ten principles as follows: assessment for learning should:

1. be part of effective planning of teaching and learning;
2. focus on how students learn;
3. be recognized as central to classroom practice;
4. be regarded as a key professional skill for teachers;
5. be sensitive and constructive because any assessment has an emotional impact;
6. be critical for learner motivation;
7. promote commitment to learning goals and a shared understanding of the criteria by which students are assessed;
8. provide guidance to students about how to improve;
9. develop students' capacity for self-assessment;
10. recognize the full range of achievements of all students.

It seems from the foregoing discussion that the essence of the strategic assessment is to inform instruction and improve or promote learning. Thus, the question now is: can the strategic assessment promote learning? ARG (2002) and Clarke (2005) discuss the answer to this question referring back to what Black and William (1998) synthesised. Black and William (1998) analyze 250 studies that link between assessment and learning or achievement. They conclude that research indicates that there is clear and incontrovertible evidence that learning is enhanced by the way of assessment. However, the extent of this improvement depends on five, deceptively, key factors:

1. The provision of effective feedback to students;
2. The active involvement of students in their own learning;
3. Adjusting teaching to take account of the result of assessment;
4. A recognition of the profound influence assessment has on the motivation and self-esteem of students since both are crucial influences on learning;

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5. The need for students to be able to assess themselves and understand how to improve.

In contrast, Black and William (1998) set forth five hindering factors that may inhibit the positive effects of strategic assessment in improving learning these are:
1. A tendency for teachers to assess quantity of work and presentation rather than the quality of learning;
2. Greater attention given to marking and grading, much of it tending to lower the self-esteem of pupils, rather than to providing advice for improvement;
3. A strong emphasis on comparing pupils with each other which demoralises the less successful learners;
4. Teachers' feedback to pupils often serves social and managerial purposes rather than helping them to learn more effectively;
5. Teachers not knowing enough about their pupils' learning needs.

Therefore, instruction needs to create a learning culture that encourages strategic assessment (Shepard, 2004; Clarke, 2005). Instruction needs to consider different procedures that encourage strategic use of assessment in promoting learning and how to adjust teaching to respond effectively to the results of such assessment. In addition, instruction needs to avoid or at least not stress on hindering factors as stated above by Black and William (1998).

Considering the advantages and demerits of both static assessment (SA) and dynamic assessment (DA), the most and foremost merit of DA is to inform instruction and intervention which promotes students' learning and to predict future performance of students (Elliott, 2000).

> *It truly is the case that dynamic testing is unique in its ability to look not only backward, but forward (...) Indeed, the main use of tests is to predict the future (Sternberg, 2000: xv).*

However, it is relatively complicated to administer. This may explain why it is not widespread in comparison with SA. On the other hand, psychologists are comfortable and satisfied with SA way of administering which is universal and straightforward (Sternberg, 2000; Elliott, 2000; Gullo, 2005).

On the other hand, SA is a product-oriented in nature and then reveals inadequate information about students' performance. It reflects the current level of students' performance, but does not provide information about the processes behind that performance (Campione & Brown, 1985: 10; Gullo, 2005). In other words, some functions or processes behind performance may be in the process of maturation and are likely to be developed with some guidance. SA represents the fruits and then is retrospective and therefore, it is imperfect for predicting future reading performance or designing instruction, while, DA represents the 'buds' or 'flowers' and hence is prospective and therefore, it is a critical predictor for future reading performance and informing instruction/intervention (Vygotsky, 1978; Bednar & Kletzien, 1990; Spector, 1992; Lidz & Elliott, 2000). DA could provide information regarding the current level of reading literacy performance, the reading literacy processes/strategies that students use or fail to use to meet various reading task demands, and the students' capability to change/learn given appropriate instruction (Bednar & Kletzien, 1990). To sum up, the difference between static and dynamic assessment exemplifies the difference between performance and capacity.

> *Performance necessarily includes capacity, but is not totally coincident with it (…) the essential characteristics of dynamic assessment are that they are interactive, open-ended, and generate information about the responsiveness of the learner intervention (Lidz & Elliott, 2000: 7).*

The point to be made is: RLA should be strategic. It is meant to fit the purpose, in this sense, it may be a dynamic in some cases, and a static in others.

3.2.2 Why RLA?

After discussing the theoretical bases that underpin RLA, the researcher turns to discuss the second issue mentioned above: why assessment? In other words, what are the purposes of RLA in secondary school? Broadly speaking, "assessment exists to promote learning and to inform others about what has been successful" (Sangster & Overall, 2006: 1). The same meaning is echoed by ARG (2006) as it refers to the fact that

> *assessment is used in many ways in education. A good deal of attention is now given to its use in helping teaching and learning, as described as assessment for learning (AFL), or formative assessment (...) Assessment of learning or summative, which is used to summarise what pupils know or can do at certain times in order to report achievement and progress (p. 2).*

In other words, RLA may be conducted for different purposes, chief among them and more dynamically: to understand students' reading needs or strengths and weaknesses; to inform instruction how to meet and develop students' needs; to probe and diagnose students' reading problems and struggles; to rise students' motivation and engagement in reading activity; to feed back students' about their reading performance or capacity; to pass and share information to parents about their children's progress; or more statically to select and placement of students; or to get information for the purposes of comparison and accountability. Or more focused on curriculum, to evaluate and consider the reading curriculum's effectiveness or strengths and weaknesses (Wintle & Harrison, 1999; Wragg, 2001).

3.2.3 How to conduct RLA?

Whatever the purpose in question, 'strategic assessment' is meant to fit that purpose. It is very critical to know how to achieve that purpose. In other words, how to assess? And what are the different strategies that an assessor may use to fit the assessment purposes? In this context, an assessor needs to use a variety of strategies to serve these purposes. An assessor may use questionnaires, interviews, classroom observations, checklists,

attitudes and interests measures, discussions, face to face conferences, questioning students, self-assessment lists, written work, portfolios, parents input, standardised tests, or computerized tests...etc. (Wintle & Harrison, 1999; Wragg, 2001; McKenna & Stahi, 2003; Gullo, 2005). Moreover, assessment strategies can be broadly categorized under two headings: testing strategies and non-testing strategies. The former can be categorized according to four dimensions as follows: group vs. individual test; formal vs. informal; norm-referenced vs. criterion-referenced test; and survey, screening, and diagnostic test. However, most valuable information about students' needs and informing instruction to meet these needs are derived from non-testing strategies such as, written work, parents input, portfolios, or classroom observations (McKenna & Stahi, 2003).

'Strategic assessment' advocated in the present research needs to use testing and non-testing strategies to reflect and improve the main targets of the reading literacy curriculum that are:

1. Reading literacy for meaning;
2. Reading literacy fluency (i.e. automaticity, accuracy, expression);
3. Strategic reading literacy;
4. Reading literacy engagement (i.e. reading attitudes, interests, or motivation);
5. And meta-reading literacy processes.

Moreover, there is a repertoire of strategies that assessors employ while assessing reading literacy in secondary education. It can be argued that most information about students' reading and how it can be improved, is derived from informal assessment strategies such as, portfolios, checklists, self-assessment, informal reading inventories (IRI), or classroom observations, whereas, information needed for grading, success, comparison, or accountability can be best derived from standardized formal strategies (Harris & Sipay, 1980; McKenna & Stahi, 2003; Gullo, 2005). This would provide an authentic picture about students' reading literacy ability. In other words, what is needed is strategic assessment by which informal and formal strategies can be employed to portray an authentic picture that reveals what students know and can do in a variety of

contexts/situations. The point is that each type of assessment complements the other and each type provides only one aspect of student's performance. The researcher intends to shed light on some of these strategies which are widely used and proved to be effective in assessing reading literacy in secondary education.

In this direction, portfolios are seen as a shift in assessment. Portfolio is a

classroom-based and grassroots efforts represent a major shift in the practices and goals of assessment. In terms of practice, portfolios represented a change in orientation from external control to collaboration, from quantitative to qualitative assessment, and from the traditional preset controls to emerging possibilities (Tierney & other, 1998: 484).

The contribution of the portfolio is to provide authentic, continuous, multidimensional, and collaborative information about students' reading practices (Valencia, 1990; Johns & VanLeirsburg, 1990, 1991; Sparapani & others, 1997, Barrett, 2007). The portfolio exemplifies collections of evidence to represent and document students' reading practices in different situations at a point of time. Examples of these collections may include samples of students' work, teachers' observations or notes, checklists, or reading logs (Hiebert & Calfee, 1992; Gullo, 2005). It is worth mentioning that to save time and efforts, to make the portfolio manageable and to maximize the positive effects of it, three main principles need to be considered:

1. How to choose the collections to be included. In this vein, when collecting and enclosing collections teachers and students need to considering how far these collections tell about students' progress, accomplishments; how far they help teachers in making decisions regarding an individual student, and steps to be taken to help them; and how far these collections assist students in understanding their own progress and achievement (Gullo, 2005).

2. How to plan, organize, manage, and develop the portfolio which exemplify challenges of using it. To overcome these practical challenges, it is necessary to

have a common structure of across all students. A rationale, goals, or systematic procedures for selecting the collections need to be taken into account as a base for portfolio structure (Paulson, Paulson, & Meyer, 1991; Johns & VanLeirsburg, 1990, 1991).

3. However, despite these practical challenges, portfolio assessment is worth doing since it provides valuable information that can be used in understanding students reading progress and development, informing instruction, or reporting information to a third interested party e.g. families, other teachers, or curriculum designers (Tierney & other, 1998; Gullo, 2005).

The Informal Reading Inventory (IRI) is another critical assessment strategy. IRI is

a series of graded representative selections taken from each reader level in a published reading series and is used as criterion-referenced test. It can be employed to determine a child's general level of reading ability, as well as yielding diagnostic information (Harris & Sipay, 1980: 175).

It can be argued that IRI yields information about reading comprehension, fluency, or decoding. It is used to identify students' reading level i.e. independent, instructional, or frustrated level as indicated formerly in this chapter. Also, it provides valuable information about students' reading needs, strengths or weaknesses (Harris & Sipay, 1980; McKenna & Stahi, 2003). IRI is a crucial strategy for providing data that can be used to prompting learning and informing and planning instruction.

To make some judgements about grading, success, or accountability, the best strategies to use are norm-referenced NRT vs. criterion-referenced CRT test. Put simply, NRT is used to compare students' reading performance with might be normally expected of other students/population. Whereas, CRT is used to compare students' reading performance against predefined criteria. NRT is a useful source of information about the students' overall reading performance with respect to other students, whereas, CRT is

useful for mastery learning or competency-based assessment (Hall, Ribovich & Ramig, 1979; Harris & Sipay, 1980; McKenna & Stahi, 2003; Biggs, 2003).

From another perspective,

> *the attitudes and interests of an individual child may differ sharply from the norm. This is why it is always important to assess children and not merely to assume that they conform to stereotypical pattern (McKenna & Stahi, 2003: 205).*

In this vein, there are many strategies to assess and gain information about students' reading attitudes, interests, and motivation chief among them, attitude surveys; interest inventories; open-ended questionnaires; classroom observations; tracking entries in students' reading journals; (ibid, 2003) interviewing each students; or using checklists. (Harris & Sipay, 1980).

In addition, students need to be actively engaged and be part of the assessment process. Self-assessment strategy is very important. In this vein, ARG (2002) explains how far the self-assessment is a critical component of assessment for reading by which students get deep understandings of their strengths and weaknesses, what reading targets they achieved, and what they need to do, and more importantly how to use this information to plan next steps.

> *Independent learners have the ability to seek out and gain new skills, new knowledge and new understandings. They are able to engage in self-reflection and to identify the next steps in their learning. Teachers should equip learners with the desire and the capacity to take charge of their learning through developing the skills of self-assessment (ARG, 2002: 1).*

In addition, Clarke (2005) refers to some key principles that need to be considered for more effective self- and peer-assessment these are:

1. Aim for students constructively marking their own work against the learning objectives of the task, sometimes with a partner;

2. Students need to be trained, in stages, to mark their own and each other's work;

3. There need to be ground rules about paired marking to avoid anxiety;

4. Success criteria should be a focus of self-assessment, mainly as a checklist and to identify any help needed;

5. Traffic lights are the best used with knowledge statements for self-assessment, but can be used successfully in other areas;

6. Students can peer-assess their work with a variety of templates and formats (p.136).

The argument is that self-assessment is a powerful strategy in improving reading literacy performance. Since it raises students' motivation to read and promote their reading achievement (Vollands & others, 1996) also, it is very useful in informing instruction by which teachers can improve reflective actions and practices and know how to improve students reading literacy (Wold, 2000). This point leads the discussion to a much related issue that of computer assisted assessment which can be viewed as a self-assessment strategy.

It can be argued that the computer can be an effective tool in assessing reading literacy. In this vein, the 'STAR' early literacy assessment is a computer-adaptive assessment that has proved to be an effective, inexpensive, and accurate strategy in diagnostic pre-reading and early reading literacy needs in seven areas: general reading readiness, gramophonic knowledge, phonics, phonological awareness, vocabulary, structural analysis, and comprehension (Renaissance Learning, 2001). In addition, the Accelerated Reader (AR) is a computer assisted assessment of reading understanding of 'real books' and is a curriculum-based assessment (Vollands & others, 1996; RL, 2001; Topping & Fisher, 2001). Topping and Fisher (2001) argue that AR promotes, when implemented well, students reading understanding, motivation, or awareness. Also, it could inform

teachers and guide their effective practice. In addition, it is practical and valuable in terms of time, effort, or even information it provides. As they state that AR is:

1. *more frequent assessment;*

2. *more detailed assessment;*

3. *in less time;*

4. *with greater consistency;*

5. *formative feed back to students;*

6. *aims to raise metacognitive awareness;*

7. *aims to motivate students to read more, longer, harder books;*

8. *formative feedback to the teacher;*

9. *class-wide diagnostic information, including at risk alert;*

10. *helps the teacher promote and manage effective reading practice (p. 3).*

In fact, AR is proved to be effective assessment strategy that improved students' reading understanding and motivation (Vollands & others, 1996). This improvement in reading comprehension examined from primary school through junior high school (Topping & Fisher, 2001). To conclude, the following figure refers to the main characteristics of the RLA advocated in the present research.
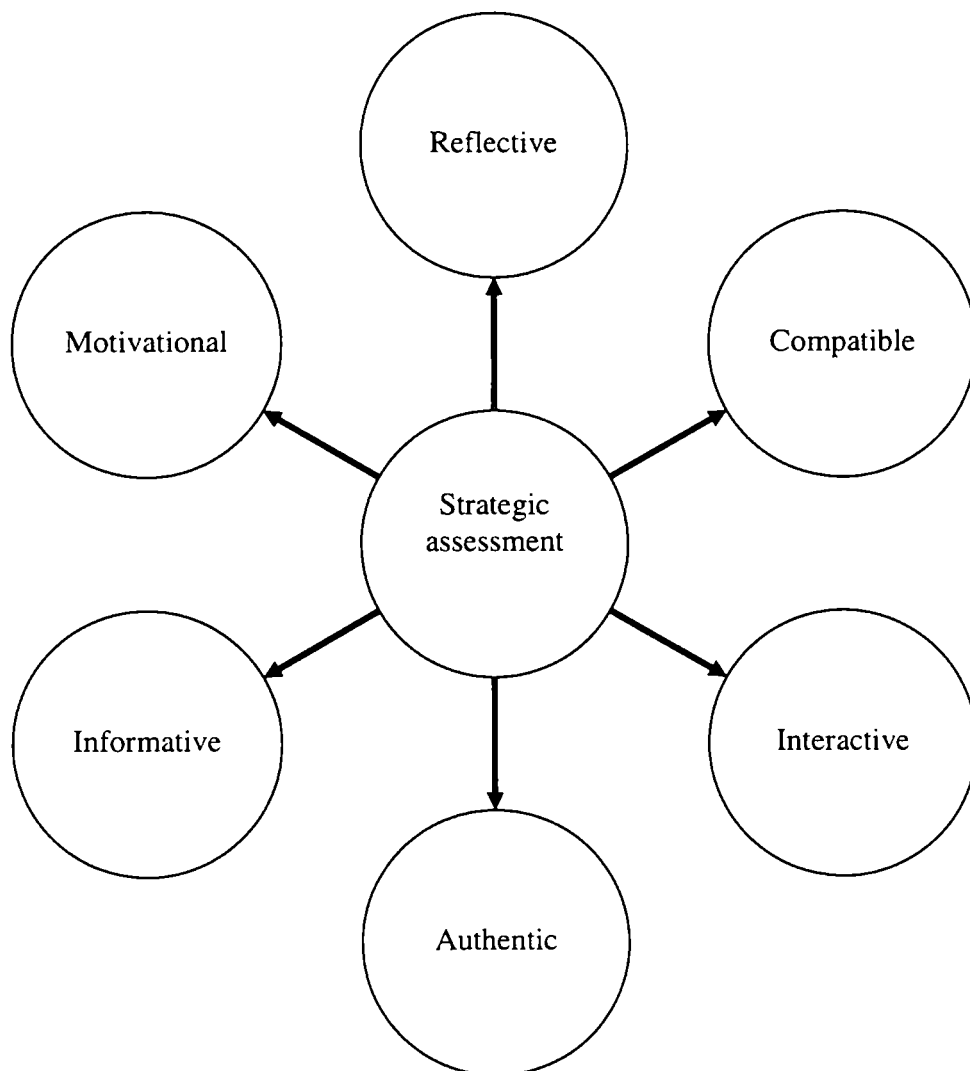
Figure 3.7: Strategic assessment for and/or of reading literacy

The present research advocates the 'strategic assessment' of reading literacy which has chief characteristics as follows:

1. It is reflective of the reading literacy targets revealed by theory and targeted by the curriculum of reading literacy. The scope of the assessment in the present research involves reading literacy for meaning; reading literacy fluency; strategic reading; reading literacy engagement; and meta-reading literacy processes. In

addition, these reading literacy targets are consistent with the reading literacy model adapted in the present research which was developed by Ruddell and Unrau (1994, 2004).

2. It is compatible in a sense of, it is meant to fit assessment strategy to assessment purpose. Whatever the purpose targeted, each purpose needs one or more strategies to be achieved. For instance, if the purpose is to inform instruction then, strategies such as portfolios, classroom observations, or informal tests held by teachers would suit that purpose. Another example, if the purpose is to grade students then, a standardized formal test held by the education district would suit partially that purpose. A third example, if the purpose is to understand what an individual student needs then, the teacher may use a diagnostic test.

3. It is interactive. In other words, it is an integral part of everyday instruction within the classroom context. In this sense, it is a continuous and formative process. In addition, it is stressing involvement of students as self-assessors, and sharing assessment criteria between teachers, students, or even parents.

4. It is authentic in the sense of it needs to assess students while they are reading authentic texts (i.e. authentic texts are texts written not in a simplified way for the purpose of instruction) for genuine purpose e.g. reading a book or a story in the public library for enjoyment or for getting some information. In other words, it needs to reflect the actual level of students reading literacy, which in turn, requires using a variety of strategies in different situations for different purposes i.e. using portfolios; interviews; oral performance; formal or informal testing; formative or summative testing ... etc.

5. It is informative. It is communicating results by using it in promoting students' reading literacy abilities; informing instruction; reporting to parents about their children progress; or even reporting the results for the purpose of grading, success, or accountability. For example, teachers may use students' interests lists

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to know the common and individuals reading interests in their classes and then help students to develop reading literacy interests.

6. Above all, it is motivational. In other words, it has positive effects on students reading ability. Since it can be used to develop students' self-efficacy; improve the potentiality or the capacity to read by knowing how to improve reading; or raise motivation for reading. This can be achieved by feeding back to students effectively.

This chapter discussed two majors components of RLCD: targets and assessment and explains 'what ought to be' in these two components. The next chapter will discuss the other two components of RCLD: instruction and content.

CHAPTER FOUR: READING LITERACY: INSTRUCTION AND CONTENT

4.0 Introduction

This chapter is concerned with two major components of designing a reading literacy curriculum for secondary school students: instruction and content. The reason behind combining those two components is that usually reading literacy instruction is carried out while the student is reading content or different materials/texts. In making this combination, the researcher intends to clarify three related elements regarding reading literacy instruction (RLI). These are: students' approaches to reading and teachers' approaches to teaching reading literacy; and strategies for reading literacy instruction for secondary school in Egypt. In addition, the researcher discusses the content of reading literacy, what it involves and how can it be chosen. Throughout, this chapter will seek to clarify how far reading literacy instruction and content are consistent with what has been discussed in earlier chapters, especially reading literary theory and reading literacy targets and assessment.

4.1 Approaches to reading literacy instruction (RLI)

As far as RLI is concerned, there are strong grounds for suggesting that it needs to be reflective. In other words, different approaches might be able to offer insights that are consistent with the nature of reading literacy process as constructive, interactive and multidimensional process. Wade and Moje (2000) argue that

> *using multiple approaches to text and learning, we may be able to expand our understanding of the role of text in the classroom learning and work with more students to expand their textual, social, and cultural worlds (p. 623).*

Teaching is initiated by teachers and learning is initiated by students. In practice, there is an enormous body of reading literacy research in secondary education that points out how far teaching and learning interact as instruction dimensions/facets to develop reading literacy in secondary education (Alvermann & Moore, 1996), and this meaning can be depicted in the below figure.

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┌─────────────────┐                                      ┌─────────────────┐
│  Teaching and   │ ◄──────► Interactive Instruction ◄──► │  Learning and   │
│    teacher      │                                      │    students     │
└─────────────────┘                                      └─────────────────┘
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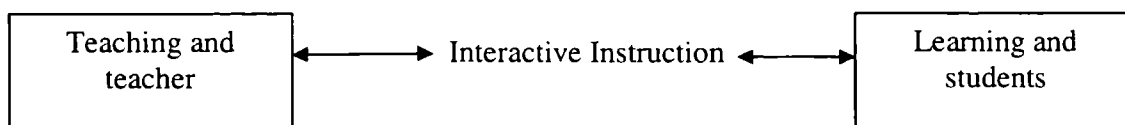
Figure 4.1: Interactive instruction

The argument here is that instruction involves interaction between students and teachers or learning and teaching. Thus, the following two sections are dedicated to clarify approaches to reading and approaches to teaching reading. Throughout the discussion the researcher attempts to explain, where appropriate, how learning and teaching can interact with each other to improve reading literacy in secondary school. The questions which arise in this context are: how students approach reading literacy? How can teachers approach teaching of reading literacy? What is the relationship between teaching and learning as two facets of RLI? And above all, what is the relevance of these learning and teaching approaches to reading literacy in secondary education in the Egyptian context?

4.1.1 Students' approaches to reading literacy

The question to be answered here is: how do students approach reading literacy? First of all, students can approach learning at two different levels: the deep level and the surface level. It can be argued that the study of learning levels/approaches is mostly associated with Marton and Säljö (1976). They explain the difference between the two levels and what characterizes each learning level when students read.

> *In the case of surface-level processing, the student directs his attention towards learning the text itself (the sign), i.e. he has a 'reproductive' conception of learning which means that he is more or less forced to keep to a rote-learning strategy. In the case of deep-level processing, on the other hand, the student is directed towards the intentional content of the learning material (what is*

signified), i.e. he is directed towards comprehending what the author wants to say about (pp. 7-8).

According to this view, some students deeply focus on understanding and constructing meaning from a text in light of their prior knowledge. On the other hand, some students process a text in a surface manner without understanding or without connection between new and existing schemata. So, at one level, students are passively processing texts at the surface and are concerned with covering the content and memorizing information. By contrast, some students actively process texts and are concerned with understanding the central point, argument and clarifying ambiguity. It is claimed that the latter students show more successful and versatile learning can occur (Petty, 2004: 275-276). Moreover, Petty (2004) adds another level, where students effortlessly and rapidly read a text as he explains that

zero-level processing, where the learner simply goes through the motion of reading the text, believing that understanding will automatically follow by some osmosis-like process. The student is concerned with getting it over as quickly as possible, what's for tea (p. 276).

The argument is that this osmosis approach to reading can be useful when students need to get quick information from text e.g. reading brochures, manual instructions, or menus.

The question which arises is: why students adopt one approach over the other? In other words, different situations may call for different approaches. More precisely, what encourages the deep learning? What provokes the surface learning? Or even what promotes osmosis approach? In this vein, there are some factors that encourage deep learning. Students are likely to adopt deep learning approach (DLA) to reading when they are, on the one hand, actively motivated, engaged, and interacting with peers and teachers in reading activity and furthermore, when the information they read is well-organized (Biggs, 1989).

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By contrast, Gibbs (1992) summarises reasons why readers might adopt a surface learning approach (SLA) to reading that are to do with overloading students with course materials or class contact hours which leaves no time for pursuing read materials in depth. Also, SLA can be encouraged if students have no choice over materials they read or the method of study. Above all, it can be induced by senses of threat and anxiety provoked by assessment which emphasises recalling factual information and memorisation. In addition, Gibbs (1992) and Toohey (1993) argue that a well-planned and organised course design, instruction, and assessment are critical factors in encouraging DLA. By contrast, ill-organised and inappropriate course design, instruction, and assessment provoke SLA.

The argument is that students can not be classified on a dichotomy spectrum of surface or deep approach to reading. Rather, they adopt a 'strategic approach' where their learning is a responsive and context-derived, as shaped by their perception of reading task demands, their own orientation and strategy towards reading task, and their perceptions of teaching (Laurillard, 1979; Gibbs, 1992). Therefore, it is very important to raise students' awareness of what they are doing and why. This in turn, helps them in making decisions about their strategic learning (ibid, 1979). In fact, this meaning is stressed by Ausubel (1943) when he explains that meaningful learning depends on both students' orientation and the material being read.

> *Meaningful learning as a process presupposes, in turn, both that the learner employs a meaningful learning set and that the material he learns is potentially meaningful to him (p. 22).*

This discussion can be depicted in the following figure which explains components of a 'strategic approach to reading' referred to by Laurillard (1979).
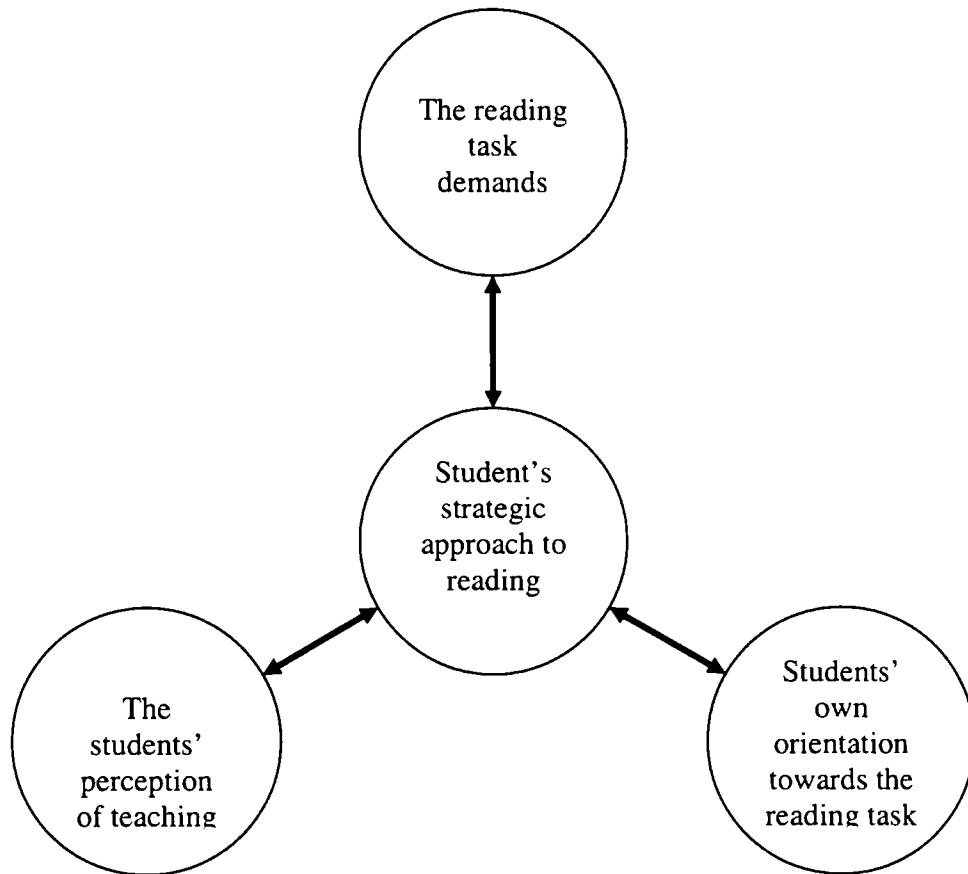
Figure 4.2: Components of student's strategic approach to reading

In addition, Ramsden (2003) argues that the concept of a learning approach to reading as establishing a relation between students and material being learned. In his own words, it is

> *a qualitative aspect of learning. It is about how people experience and organize the subject matter of a learning task; it is about 'what' and 'how' they learn, rather than 'how much' they remember. When a student learns, he or she relates to different tasks in different ways (p. 41).*

Students can be classified into two groups according to the relation they establish to the text. At one level, students are actively motivated, engaged with a text to construct meanings and organize the information they read. At the other level, they segment a text into parts and isolated chunks of information to be memorised and recalled later for external purposes e.g. exams (Ramsden, 2003: 42).

```
                    ┌─────────────────────────┐
                    │   Approaches to reading  │
                    └─────────────────────────┘
                       ╱                   ╲
         ┌────────────────────┐      ┌────────────────────┐
         │  Surface/Atomistic │      │    Deep/Holistic   │
         └────────────────────┘      └────────────────────┘
            ╱            ╲               ╱            ╲
  ┌───────────┐  ┌───────────┐  ┌───────────┐  ┌───────────┐
  │ 'What':   │  │ 'How':    │  │ 'What':   │  │ 'How':    │
  │ Focusing  │  │ Distorting│  │ Focusing  │  │Maintaining│
  │ on signs  │  │ the       │  │ on        │  │ the       │
  │           │  │ structure │  │ meanings  │  │ structure │
  │           │  │ of the    │  │           │  │ of the    │
  │           │  │ task/text │  │           │  │ task/text │
  └───────────┘  └───────────┘  └───────────┘  └───────────┘
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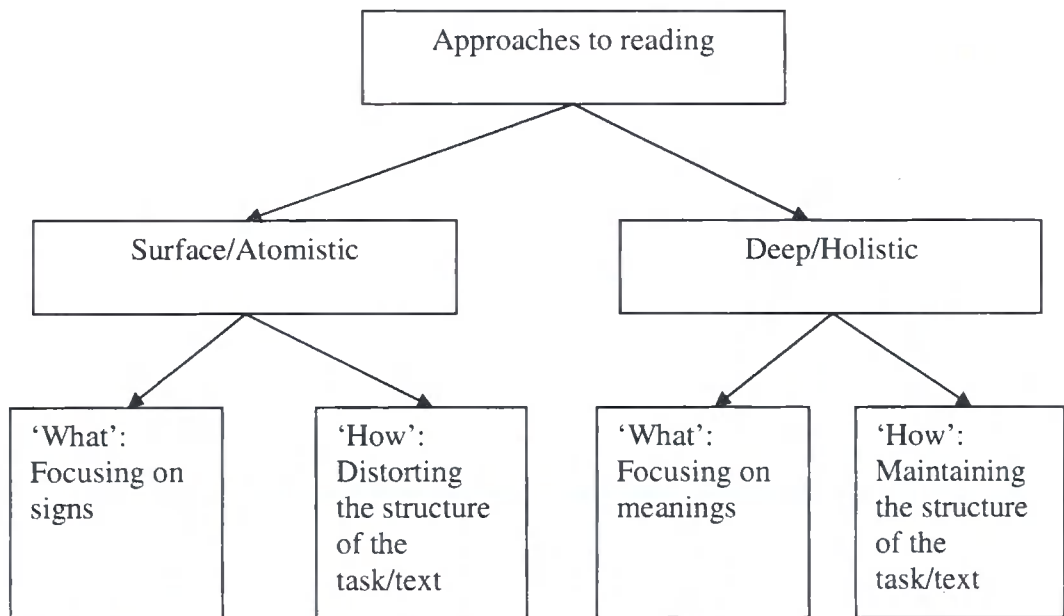
Figure 4.3: Learning approaches to reading, adapted with some modifications from Ramsden (2003: 44)

Furthermore, Ramsden (2003) argues that

everyone is capable of both deep and surface approaches, from childhood onwards. An approach describes a relation between the student and learning he or she is doing (p. 45).

In addition, it can be argued that approaches to learning and learning styles are different. Learning approaches to reading are influenced by students' orientation, perception of teaching, or reading task demands whereas, learning style is influenced by students' strengths/intelligences and instruction. Also, every single student is capable of learning

approaches to reading according to the situation i.e. orientation, perception of teaching, reading task demands, while student possesses all learning styles, s/he adopts a certain predominant style according to her/his certain strength/intelligence.

A very important point that remains is what characterizes each learning approach to reading? And how might these characteristics be utilised by RLI? In this vein, Ramsden (2003:47) refers to different characteristics of both deep and surface approaches to reading. In the deep approach, students:

1. intend to understand and maintain structure of text;
2. focus on 'what is signified' (e.g. the author's argument, or the concepts applicable to solving problems);
3. relate previous knowledge to new knowledge;
4. relate knowledge from different courses;
5. relate theoretical ideas to everyday experience;
6. relate and distinguish evidence and argument;
7. organise and structure content in a coherent whole;
8. and are internally motivated.

Conversely, in the surface approach, students:
1. intend to complete requirements and distort structure of text;
2. focus on 'the signs'(e.g. the words and the sentences of the text, or unthinkingly on the formula needed to solve the problem);
3. focus on unrelated parts of the text;
4. memorise information for assessment;
5. associate facts and concepts unreflectively;
6. fail to distinguish principles from examples;
7. treat the task as an external imposition;
8. and are externally motivated to satisfy demands of assessment, with knowledge cut off from everyday reality.

In the same vein, Entwistle, Hanley and Hounsell (1979) refer to three approaches to reading: deep, surface and achieving approach. Also, they explain different characteristics of each in terms of four aspects; students' orientation, motivation, processing information stated in a text and expected outcomes. Above all, they stress the overlap between such approaches. Figure 4.4 depicts their point of view. They see students as needing to build understanding and construct meaning from the texts they read. Sometimes, students need to reproduce and memorize as in the case of preparing for exams or recalling factual information or specific ideas or notes. So, strategic readers fit their orientation and strategy according to their purpose for reading.

Factor	Orientation and intention	Motivation (personality type)	Approach or style	Process		Outcome
				Stage I	**Stage II**	
1	Understanding	Intrinsic: (autonomous and syllabus-free)	Deep approach/versatile	All four processes below used appropriately to reach understanding		Deep level of understanding
			Comprehension learning	Building overall description of the content area	Reorganizing incoming information to relate to previous knowledge or experience and establishing personal meaning	Incomplete understanding attributable to globetrotting
2	Reproducing	Extrinsic and fear of failure: (Anxious and syllabus-bound)	Operation learning	Detailed attention to evidence and steps in the argument	Relating evidence to conclusion and maintaining a critical objective stance	Incomplete understanding attributable to improvidence
			Surface approach	Memorisation	Over learning	Surface level of understanding
3	Achieving high grades	Hope for success: (stable, self-confident and ruthless).	Organized /achievement oriented	Any combination of the six above processes considered appropriate to perceived task requirement and criteria of assessment		High grades with or without understanding

Figure 4.4: Learning approaches to reading, from Entwistle, Hanley, & Hounsell (1979: 376)

It can be inferred from Entwistle's, Hanley's, & Hounsell's (1979) approaches to reading that RLI needs to highlight the following points:

1. The essence of any reading is understanding and constructing meaning from texts;

2. The skill of strategic reading, where students fit their approach to reading accordingly with their purposes is important;

3. Encouraging intrinsic motivation over extrinsic motivation is helpful for learner.

Alvermann and Moore (1996) carried out a review of experimental research on strategies that aim at improving learning from text for secondary school students (7-12 grades). They show some characteristics that occur in reading literacy practices and that appear to encourage surface learning, these are: a predominance of textbooks as reading material; stressing explicit and factual information and a predominantly teacher-centred approach. They suggest that these predominant trends are responses to demands for order, accountability, socialization, and resources e.g. time and materials.

The present research is concerned with reading literacy in the Arabic language for the Egyptian secondary students (14-17 year-old or 10-12 grades). Te'eima (1998) and Younis (2005) refer to some reading practices in secondary reading in Egypt that, from the researcher's view, encourage surface or rote learning approach to reading, these are:

1. The reading curriculum mainly targets literal understanding and recalling factual information;

3. All students across Egypt study the same materials without any consideration to their reading attitudes, interests, or needs: one-subject narrative textbook i.e. story or novel or play and another varied-subjects informational textbook;

4. Instruction depends on a teacher-centered approach and teaching for external purposes e.g. success, grading or passing exams. Thus, there is no challenges for students to get engaged and deeply involve in reading activities;

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5. Assessment is summative and stresses the recall of explicit and factual information stated in a text.

These practices draw attention to the critical role of teaching which influences students' approaches to reading literacy. Thus, the following section is dedicated to discuss approaches to teaching, the other facet of instruction, and how these approaches interact with approaches to learning.

4.1.2 Teaching approaches to reading literacy

Entwistle, Hanley and Hounsell (1979: 377) argue that approaches to learning are paralleled by similar or contrasted approaches to teaching with similar characteristics and strengths and weaknesses. So, an approach to teaching may promote understanding, or reproduction, or even both. In a similar vein, others argue that an approach to teaching can be executive/instructive, facilitative, or liberationist (Fenstermacher & Soltis, 2004). The liberationist approach (LA) is

> *rooted in the notions of liberal education, wherein the goal is to liberate the mind to wonder, to know and understand, to imagine and create using the full intellectual inheritance of civilized life (Fenstermacher & Soltis, 2004: 44).*

It can be argued that LA is consistent with what can be achieved through developing deep understanding, and creating opportunities to enhance students' intellectual strengths/intelligences. In addition, Association of American Colleges and Universities (AACU) argues that liberal education is a philosophy of education that is concerned with empowering students with knowledge, transferable strategies, or ways of learning that improve students' engagement and enables them to play an effective role in their societies (http://www.aacu.org/resources/liberaleducation/index.cfm, December 10th, 2008).This notion is emphasized by Pearson and Fielding (1996: 820) when they posit that instruction needs to promote what students comprehend from a text (local effects) and students' ability to comprehend the text (transfer effects). LA emphasises the fact

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that teaching needs to create opportunities for promoting understanding and how to use reading literacy in enhancing students' everyday lives.

In another vein, the facilitative approach (FA)

> *places a high value on what students bring to the classroom setting. It places considerable emphasis on making use of students' prior knowledge. The facilitative teacher is typically an empathetic person who believes in helping individuals grow personally and reach a high level of self-actualization and self-understanding (Fenstermacher & Soltis, 2004: 5).*

The important contributions of FA is its highlighting the critical role students play in their own reading and changing the view of relationship between teachers and students. In other words, students' prior knowledge (Anderson, 1994, 2004), orientation/approach (Laurillard, 1979; Gibbs, 1992), students' motivation (Entwistle, Hanley & Hounsell,1979) all influence their understanding text. In addition, students understand best by interaction between them and their teachers rather than instructing them to read (Ruddell & Unrau, 1994, 2004). In fact this approach to teaching highlights the role of students' prior knowledge/schemata, self-awareness and self-regulation, or self-motivation in reading literacy.

From a third perspective, the instructive/executive approach (IA)

> *views [the] teacher as a manger of complex classroom processes, a person charged with bringing about certain outcomes with students through using skills and techniques available (Fenstermacher & Soltis, 2004: 5).*

IA portrays instruction in a linear fashion. In other words, there are three basic components of instruction: subject matter, teacher, and student. Teacher's/instructor's role is providing students/receivers with knowledge and skills embedded in a certain

subject matter. Thus, instructors use available techniques and methods to convoy their message and equip their students/receivers with prescribed outcomes.

To sum up this point, Fenstermacher and Soltis (2004) set out five core elements that characterize any teaching. They add up to 'MAKER' or an acronym of: methods of teaching, teacher's awareness of students, teacher's knowledge of the content, ends of teaching, and relationship between teacher and students. Each approach to teaching reading focuses primarily on giving priority to some elements over the others i.e. FA emphasises awareness of students, relationship between teacher and students and ends or purposes of teaching. Whereas, IA focuses primarily on methods of teaching and knowledge of the content on the other hand, LA prioritizes knowledge of the content and ends or purposes of teaching. It can be argued that

> *practising and gaining expertise in all three approaches prepares you [the teacher] to function well in different school settings, with different learners (Fenstermacher & Soltis, 2004: 73).*

Petty (2004: 133) argues that "educationists and many effective teachers come down heavily in favour of the facilitator" FA has some merits over IA as follows:

1. *It encourages active and deep learning, rather than passive and superficial learning;*

2. *It develops self-management and 'learning to learn' process skills as well as delivering the learning product;*

3. *It discourages learned helplessness and learned dependency and encourages the development of self-belief, self-reliance and autonomy;*

4. *It is less stressful and more enjoyable for the teacher, who gains the students' respect for treating them with respect (Petty. 2004: 135).*

The critical question is: what approach is good or effective? In other words, what is good or effective teaching? In this context,

good teaching is getting most students to use the higher cognitive level processes
that the more academic students use spontaneously (Biggs, 2003: 5).

According to Biggs's model of teaching, there are three major components that interact with each other: student's level of engagement/understanding, student's academic orientation, and teaching method. Good teaching is intended to raise students' level of engagement/higher order thinking e.g. generating new ideas, reflecting, or theorizing. Also, it helps students have an academic orientation e.g. clear purpose, knowing the importance or the relevance of the reading task to them and then make them more interested in reading. Above all, good teaching employs methods which encourage active and engaged learning e.g. problem-based learning (Biggs, 2003). It can be argued that Biggs bases his model and ideas about good teaching on deep and surface learning and he views good teaching as that raises students' motivation for and interest in deep learning and understanding.

From another angle, Wray and Lewis (1997) suggest an effective model of teaching reading literacy which is consistent with Vygotsky's notion of the ZPD. In this model, teacher get students engaged in reading activity through gradual release of responsibility from teacher modelling, to joint activity, to supported activity, and to individual activity. In addition, Pearson and Gallagher (1983) envisage a model which stresses the importance of explicit reading literacy instruction and the role of teachers/modellers who gradually release responsibility to students/practitioners. Actually, students understand well when they take responsibility for their reading (Gibbs & Habeshaw, 1989). The same meaning is explained by Petty (2004) as he explains that

in practice there is a continuum between instructor and facilitator where control
over learning is shared, and most teachers move back and forth along this
continuum as the situation demands (p. 133).

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Instructor: teacher is in control	Control is shared between		Facilitator: learner is in control

Control is shared between

Teacher and learner
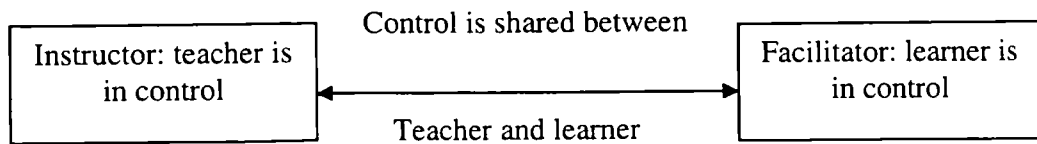
Figure 4.5: The instructor-facilitator continuum, from Petty (2004: 133)

It can be argued that

> *wise and effective teaching is not, however, simply a matter of applying general principles of teaching according to rule; those principles need adapting to your own personal strengths and to your teaching context (...) This requires a theory of teaching to reflect with, and a context of experiences as the object of reflection (Biggs, 2003: 6-9).*

This quote implies that effective teaching involves two major elements as follows:

1. a theory of/knowledge base of/repertoire of general teaching principles to work and reflect with;
2. an adaptation of these principles according to certain situations/contexts.

The idea of reflection relevant to the context of teaching is generally accepted as central and essential for any effective teaching. Thus a simple definition of effective teaching is not really feasible:

> *any single definition of effective teaching would be simplistic and inaccurate because of its insensitivity to the different learner, curricula, grade levels, and instructional materials with which teaching and learning must take place. It is the proper mix of key and helping behaviors in the context of your classroom that will define effective teaching for you (Borich, 1996: 34).*

Actually, Borich discusses some key and helping factors that he suggests do contribute to effective teaching e.g. instructional variety (a key factor), and probing (a helping factor).

In addition, Arends (1994) suggests that there is a remarkable diversity in viewing and portraying what effective teaching is. However, he argues that there are four components that contribute to effective teaching: a knowledge base on teaching to guide practice; a repertoire of effective practice techniques and strategies; reflection and problem-solving; and life-long learning and continuous development. In his words, effective teachers

> *understand the knowledge base on teaching, can execute a repertoire of best practices, have attitudes and skills necessary for reflection and problem solving, and consider learning to teach a life-long process (pp. 23-24).*

Figure 4.6 depicts Arends's view of effective teaching.
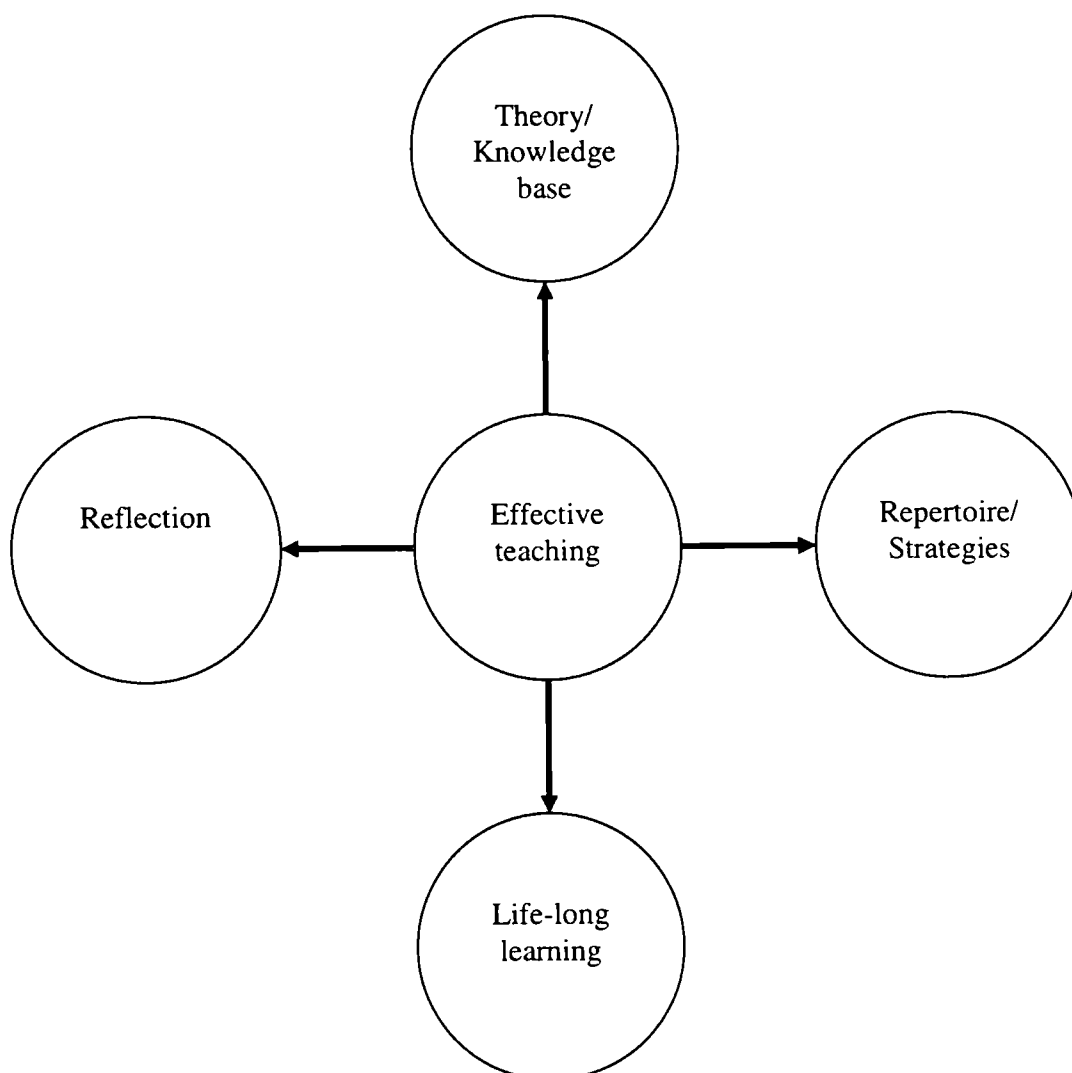
Figure 4.6: A view of effective teaching.

In this model, effective teachers have a knowledge base on teaching, know how to use it, and understand limitations of the way that research informs practice since every piece of research has its own context. In addition, they have a repertoire of executive, interactive and organizational functions. In other words, they execute a repertoire of strategies regarding various aspects of their teaching in and out of school e.g. managing the classroom, presenting information, or bridging communication between school and parents or communities. Moreover, effective teachers relate general knowledge or

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principles of teaching to their own contexts in a reflective way. Above all, they are flexible and understand that teaching is developmental and continuous process that needs to be improved (Arends, 1994). The idea of context leads the discussion to clarify how the present research uses and considers general principles on instruction and towards reading literacy instruction for secondary schools in Egypt.

4.1.3 Strategies for reading literacy instruction in secondary school

The critical issue is to identify specific strategies that help both teachers and students to enhance students' reading of different types of texts. In other words, what from the above discussion can be applied to the RLI in the secondary education in Egypt? Alvermann and Moore (2000) state that

> *we know more about what needs to be done in order to learn from text than how teachers and students approach that learning (...) There is a clear evidence that students in experimentally controlled settings benefit from strategies that promote active engagement with subject material. However, descriptions of actual practices in secondary school reading suggest that students rarely participate in such strategies. Convincing reasons for this situation are needed (p. 974).*

A plausible explanation is that in research, the context is being considered while in actual practice the teacher may adopt strategies without paying much attention to their own context. Specific context is very critical for effective instruction (Borich, 1996; Biggs, 2003).

As far as reading literacy is concerned, it is worth mentioning that it is viewed as a multiple perspectives process: linguistic, cognitive, and sociocultural, and hence reading instruction also is a multiple perspectives process. Thus, Pressley (2000) states that

> *because comprehension is complicated it requires a complicated educational strategy to meet the goal of improving readers' comprehension skills (...) the*

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development of comprehension is multi-componential and developmental and hence, teaching to stimulate the development of comprehension skills must be multi-componential and developmental (pp. 551-557).

Harrison (2004) goes with Pressley as he points out that

to take only a cognitive perspective, and to focus on teaching skills, therefore, and to ignore the wider rhetorical and social purpose of text is to deny to the novice models of how to behave like expert (p. 85).

Reading literacy process involves interactions between; teacher, reader, and text within the classroom context (Ruddell & Unrau, 1994, 2004; Wray, 2004). This interactive model includes a mixture or overlap of teacher-centred methods, student-centred methods, or teacher-student methods (Petty, 2004). This can be depicted in the following figure.
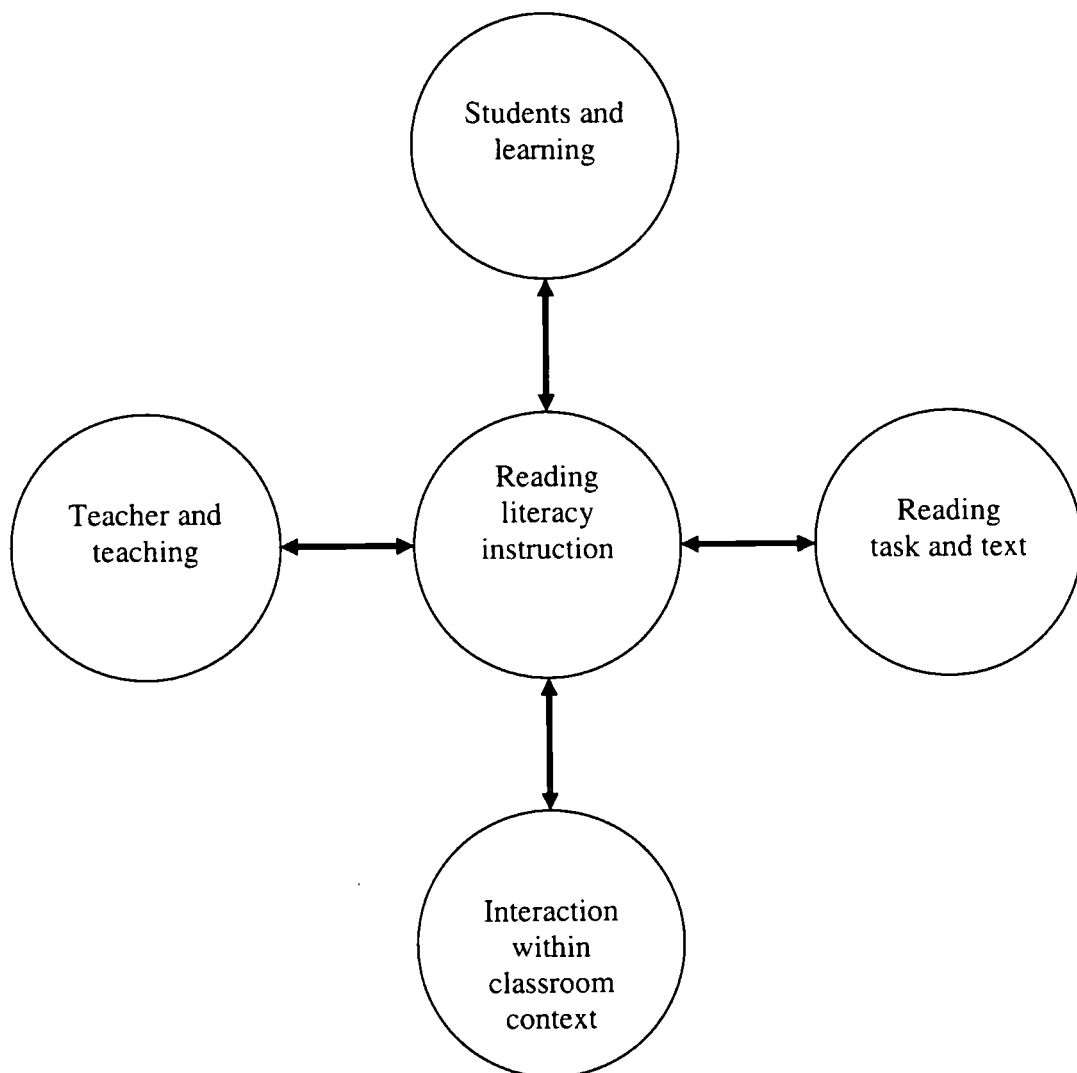
Figure 4.7: Components of reading literacy instruction

In this model, RLI needs to consider four major areas in teaching and learning of reading literacy in the secondary education. They are as follows:

1. Students e.g. orientation, level of engagement, motivation, or interests;

2. Teachers e.g. orientation, or teaching method;

3. The nature of reading literacy task and text being read;

4. Interaction between these three elements within classroom context where teachers and students work.

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In practice, RLI can utilise much of what has been discussed earlier regarding the first two components: students and learning, on the one hand, and teachers and teaching on the other. Regarding the nature of the reading literacy task, the third component, Harris and Sipay (1980: 74-75) suggest that any sound reading instruction should develop three kinds of reading literacy; developmental reading e.g. understanding; functional reading e.g. how to locate, select, and organize information; and recreational reading that relates to reader's interests. Thus, good instruction of reading literacy should take into account three major goals (i.e. attitude, process, and content goal) and apply multiple strategies that aim at:

1. Developing a positive attitude and interest in reading literacy as well as an understanding of reading as a concept. This stage is required as a basis for reading instruction (attitude goal);

2. Developing students' ability to construct meaning and to direct their comprehension. This mainly includes teaching and learning of many cognitive and meta-cognitive strategies (process goal);

3. Helping students to comprehend the authors' messages in different types of text. This mainly involves developing students' awareness of different types of text structures and information (content goal). (Duffy & Roehler, 1993)

In addition, it can be argued that RLI in the present research is concerned with developing five reading literacy key targets; reading literacy for meaning; reading literacy fluency; strategic reading literacy; reading literacy engagement; and meta-reading literacy.

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                    _____
                   /           \
                  /  Developing  \
                 |   reading for  |
                 |    meaning     |
                  \              /
                   _____/
                         ↑
   _____          |          _____
  /           \         |         /           \
 /  Developing \        |        /  Developing  \
|   strategic   |  _____  |    reading     |
|    reading    | /           \ |    fluency     |
 \             / ← Targets to  →\              /
  _____/ |   reading    |  _____/
               |   literacy    |
               |  instruction  |
                \             /
              ↙  _____/  ↘
   _____               _____
  /           \             /           \
 /  Developing \           /  Developing  \
|    meta-      |         |    reading     |
|   reading     |         |  engagement    |
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  _____/             _____/
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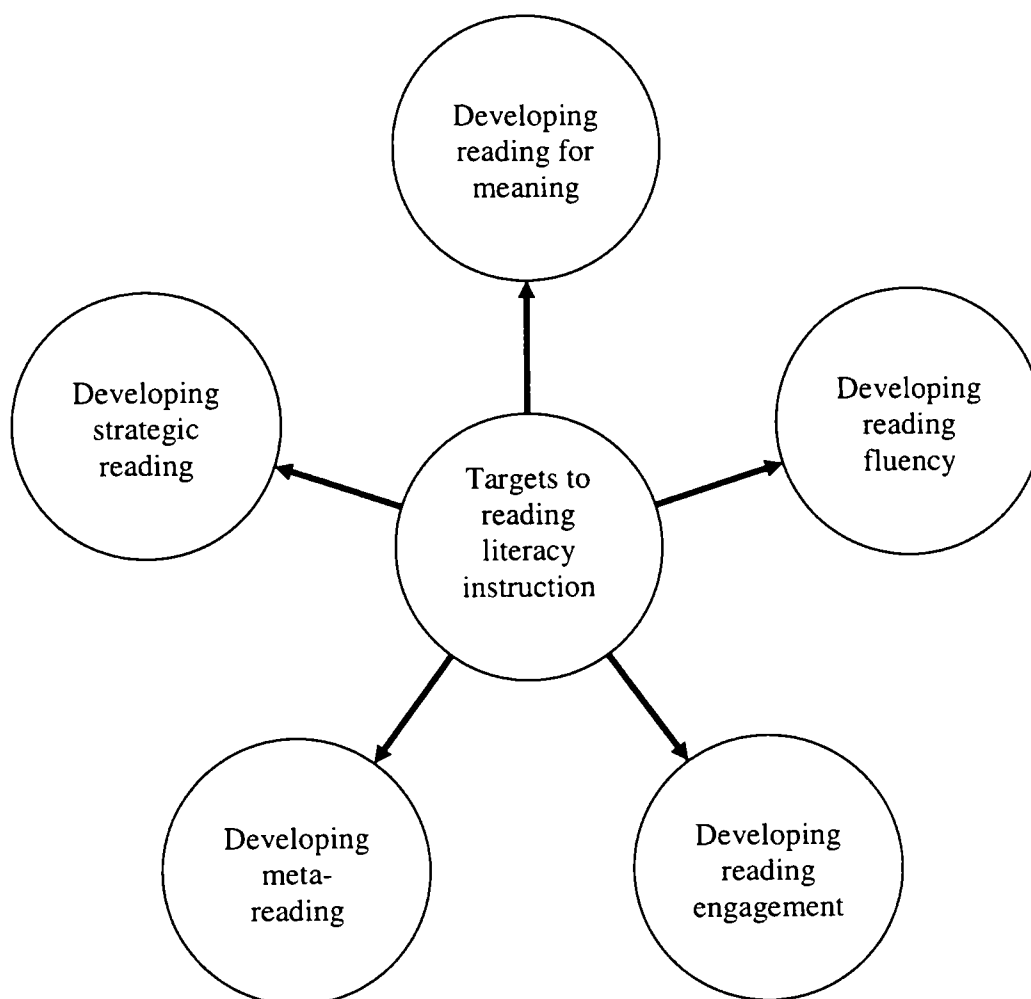
Figure 4.8: Targets for reading literacy instruction

First and foremost, RLI needs to pay special attention to students' engagement in reading activity. Students' involvement is essential for constructing meaning, improving fluency, developing strategic reading, or promoting meta-reading or students' awareness of their reading. If instruction fails to get students engaged and interested in reading activity then, developing their reading ability is not guaranteed. This point is emphasised by Duffy and Roehler (1993) when they refer to attitude goal as a basis for RLI. There is

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sound evidence in an international PISA report that being motivated and holding positive attitudes and interests in reading is very critical and related to improving reading literacy performance for fifteen-year-old students. (Kirsch et al, 2002; Artelt et al, 2003)

The crucial question which arises in this context is: how can students be motivated for read? And what disengages students from reading? The answer to the two questions is two facets of one coin. The argument is that secondary students are distracted or disengaged from reading by many factors. Chief among these are instruction practices, students' social life, self-efficacy, students' control and choice, or less or non- relevant reading tasks. Also, these same factors, if employed positively, can result in getting students involved and interested in reading literacy (Guthrie, 2008; Antonio & Guthrie, 2008; Yudowitch, Henery & Guthrie, 2008; Gibb & Guthrie, 2008; Douglass & Guthrie, 2008; Fillman & Guthrie, 2008). Although there is no magic recipe for raising students' engagement (McKenna & Stahi, 2003), students' motivation in deep reading and learning can be improved by utilising key factors that have been proved to be effective. Thus:

1. There are some key principles that help in getting students engaged and motivated to apply deep reading and understanding to text. These include: providing students with a mastery goal i.e. big goals that focus on understanding ideas and their relationships to each other or to students' life or even to other ideas in a broader context; making reading tasks relevant to students by relating instruction to students' experiences which encourages understanding and meaningful learning rather than memorizing; or rewarding effort over performance (Douglass & Guthrie, 2008).

2. Raising students' interest in reading by making reading tasks relevant to students (Gibb & Guthrie, 2008).

3. Raising students' self-efficacy and building confident readers (Yudowitch, Henery & Guthrie, 2008).

4. Promoting interactive opportunities within the classroom context (Antonio & Guthrie, 2008).

5. Securing students' self-control and choice and supporting self-directed reading (Fillman & Guthrie, 2008).

6. Assigning time for recreational reading (McKenna & Stahi, 2003).

From another perspective, as far as reading literacy pertains to understanding/meaning, then RLI must primarily be concerned with developing students' understanding and deep learning. In other words, it involves helping students to construct meaning from text. In this vein, Pearson and others (1992) point out that instruction in reading for meaning is a complex, interactive and fluid process that is affected by some key factors such as students' prior knowledge/schemata, cognitive and meta-cognitive processes involved, or the teacher's role and explicit instruction.

Similarly, Pearson and Fielding (1996) highlight the importance of the teachers' role in scaffolding students' text comprehension; the active engagement of students through self-questioning, and self-monitoring of their understanding; and interaction among students through peers, or student-teacher dialogue. Accordingly, Taylor (1992), Alvermann and Moore (1996), NRP (2000: 250) and Pearson and Fielding (2000) explain that there is a large body of research that refers to and identifies some strategies that have proved to be effective in teaching and learning of reading for secondary students such as self-questioning, reciprocal teaching, cooperative learning, self-monitoring, use of text structure, peer-interactions, or teacher-student dialogue. In addition, NRP (2000: 250) and Pearson and Fielding (2000) highlight the importance of using interactive, flexible and multiple strategies.

Still a very important point that deserves to be mentioned is that RLI, in the present research, needs to consider three main processes of reading literacy for meaning (See chapter three, reading literacy for meaning) as follows: developing literal processes,

inferential processes, and reflective processes. To address this, the researcher will clarify in more detail two strategies for constructing meaning from a text. Dymock (2005) points out that

> *students should be taught explicitly how to recognize and use expository text structures to improve comprehension and recall (...) Teachers need to explicitly teach students that expository text has many structures (p. 178).*

Teaching text structure helps students to create a mental picture of text information and improves recalling information stated in a text. Taylor (1992) and Pearson and Fielding (2000) point out that RLI should focus on text structure and they refer to some strategies that have been found to be effective in improving students' text comprehension and recall information such as, mapping/diagramming a concept or main idea; using story structure of setting, plot, goal, events, and solution; using headings and subheadings; using top-level structural organizers of different designs or organizations of text e.g. in cause and effect design, using causes, effects, and relationships grid to state the main information in a text. However, teaching text structure

> *will not guarantee comprehension, but having a clear understanding of how the text is structured will help the reader to build a coherent model of text (Dymock, 2005:178).*

In addition, there may be some value in reciprocal teaching, originally associated with Palincsar and Brown in the early 1980s and used for struggling readers. It is

> *a scaffolded technique based on teacher modelling, student's participation, and four strategies that good readers use to comprehend text: predicting, questioning, clarifying and summarizing (Oczkus, 2003: 1).*

Reciprocal teaching has been found to be effective in improving reading understanding (Kahre et al, 1999; Bruce & Robinson, 2001; Clark, 2003). Teachers and students can

use reciprocal strategies, that widely accepted by practitioners in the field, to construct meaning from text as follows.

1. Predicting, where students previewing a text and using text clues and their prior schemata to anticipate the development of text.

2. Questioning, where students generate questions about text's main ideas, specific details, or type of text.

3. Clarifying, where students direct their own constructing meaning by using self-monitoring of their own ongoing understanding.

4. Summarizing, where students recall, orchestrate and organize important ideas or components of a text that represent an overall view of a given text that reflects to somewhat extent students comprehend that text (Oczkus, 2003: 26; Wary & Lewis, 1997).

RLI needs to help students predict, question, clarify, and summarize. In this sense, reciprocal teaching strategies can be used in constructing meaning before, during and after reading. Students can anticipate meaning and make predictions based on text clues and their schemata, ask different levels of questions, clarify any blockages to literal, inferential, or reflective meanings, and make proper summaries in their own words that focus on main ideas.

Strategic reading is often proposed as a major target for RLI in secondary school. As indicated earlier (See chapter three, strategic reading literacy) strategic reading involves four interplayed components: students' stance to reading, reading strategy, reading purpose, and text being read. Thus, RLI needs to consider these components when improving strategic reading, in other words, to developing strategic readers:

1. Different characteristics of texts e.g. structure, content, style, or language (Taylor, 1992; Pearson & Fielding, 2000; Dymock, 2005; Green, 2006).

2. Different purposes for reading e.g. reading for information, reading for performing a task, or enjoyment (NAGB, 2002; Mullis et al, 2004; OECD, 2006).

3. Different reading strategies e.g. predicting, scanning, making inferences, analysing information in a text critically, appreciating literary value, or summarizing (Oczkus, 2003; Mullis et al, 2004; NAEP, 2004).

4. Different readers' stances e.g. efferent stance, or aesthetic stance (Rosenblatt, 1994, 2004; Many, 1994, 2004; Ruddell & Unrau, 1994, 2004)

The critical point that deserves to be mentioned is that RLI should emphasis the interaction among these components. In other words, how to fit reading strategy and stance to the purpose for reading and the type of text being read. Reading for understanding and deep learning requires accessing strategies that differ from reading for enjoyment or reading to perform a task.

In addition, reading literacy fluency is another major interest of RLI in the present research. For consistency and relevance reasons, RLI in the present research needs to consider four interplayed perspectives of reading literacy fluency as follows:
1. Developing students' reading rate and speed;
2. Improving students' reading accuracy;
3. Promoting students' expression and inflection in oral reading;
4. Concentrating on meaning.

For improving fluency, the first and foremost recommended strategy is practicing reading (Harris & Sipay, 1980; McKenna, 2002; Mckenna & Stahi, 2003). In other words, RLI needs to encourage reading different types of texts and reading for a variety of purposes which helps students to raise their reading rate and familiarize themselves with different kinds of texts. Furthermore, there are some practice strategies that have proved to be effective at this (Harris & Sipay, 1980; ESCR13, 1998; McKenna, 2002;

Mckenna & Stahi, 2003) such as, echo reading, repeated readings, partner reading, or oral recitation. In addition, Harris and Sipay (1980) refer to the reasons that hamper fluency, stating that

the major causes of slow reading are considered to be lack of enough practice, interesting material, and lack of motivation to improve speed (p. 576).

By contrast, to improve fluency, RLI needs to secure three elements: practice opportunities; interesting reading material; and raised student motivation. Moreover, RLI should improve fluency by considering students' eye movement.

Good reading is characterized by a wide recognition span, a small number of fixations per line, and a small number of regressions [backward movement] (Harris and Sipay, 1980: 559).

Furthermore, reading literacy fluency can be developed by introducing reading materials that students read independently (independent level discussed earlier) or with instruction support (instructional level) and avoiding frustrating materials (ESCR13, 1998).

It can be argued that different characteristics of fluent readers can be promoted by training students towards improving them. ESCR13 explains that

many fluent secondary students demonstrate:
1. *Familiarity the context of text;*
2. *Richer vocabulary;*
3. *accuracy and appropriate reading rate;*
4. *automatic word recognition skills so that attention can be devoted to meaning;*
5. *ability to chunk sentences appropriately;*
6. *awareness of syntactic features;*
7. *ability to self-correct errors (p. 51).*

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To sum up this point, RLI needs to use the following criterion for fluency.

A desirable criterion for fluency is (1) reading a passage at 100 words per minute with (2) zero or one insignificant errors and (3) adequate inflection (McKenna & Stahi, 2003: 77).

The point here is that RLI should stress understanding and constructing meaning from text. Since the essence of any reading literacy is the meaning and the significance of fluency is to improve students' understanding (White, 1995; Pinnell et al, 1995; ETS, 1995; McKenna & Stahi, 2003; Spooner & others, 2004).

A very critical target for RLI, in this context, is meta-reading. In other words, how to monitor or be aware of one's own reading and then how to plan, self-regulate, and assess one's own reading. Raising students' awareness of their reading plays an important role in improving it (Fitzgerald, 1983; Standifford, 1984; Duffy & Roehler, 1993; Nicholson, 1999; Kolic-Vehovec & Bajsanski, 2001). In practice, RLI needs to raise students' awareness of reading literacy as a concept, together with its strategies, and purposes and how to use this awareness in planning, monitoring, and assessing their own reading. (Duffy & Roehler, 1993)

Primarily, RLI needs to enhance students' concept of reading literacy as this gives a basis for raising students' awareness of their own reading. In other words, students need to know what is reading literacy in order to know how to plan, regulate, or even assess it. Otherwise, they will make misjudgements. Once students have an understanding of what reading literacy is, they need to recognize the importance of being self-regulators of their own reading. These two points are referred to by Flavell (1979) as meta-cognitive knowledge and meta-cognitive experiences/awareness respectively.

More practically, RLI can provide some strategies (Duffy & Roehler, 1993; Nicholson, 1999) to raise students' awareness and regulation of their own reading as follows:

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1. Planning strategies, where students prepare themselves for reading e.g. setting purposes, identifying strategies to be accessed, identifying which reading stance is needed, which type of text is being read, or making predictions.

2. Checking strategies, where students check their own ongoing reading and construct meaning e.g. self-questioning, clarifying, detecting and solving blockages to meaning, or modifying predictions and making new ones;

3. Assessing strategies, where students reflect on their own reading once they finish e.g. judging their understanding against purposes, organizing and reconstructing meaning, or summarizing.

4.2 The reading literacy content

The argument is that usually reading literacy instruction is carried out while the student is reading content or different materials/texts. These reading materials are used to enhance students' reading literacy.

> *By the time most pupils have entered high school, they have encountered a multitude of different texts (...) Good writers structure their ideas in patterns in order to compose well-organized discourse. Good readers know these structures and are able to use them to comprehend more effectively (Dymock, 1999: 174).*

This quote implies that reading literacy content should sample the different types of texts that students encounter in their life so that their understanding of different kinds of texts can be improved.

The same meaning is echoed by PSDE (1997) when it explains that

> *as readers interact with printed material to construct meaning, their comprehension is significantly affected by the unique characteristics of each selection (...) All texts are different to a certain extent but depending upon the*

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author's purpose, the topic and reading selections tend to employ a few predominant structural patterns. These patterns can be used to teach students to comprehend more effectively (p. 12).

The preceding quotes draw attention to critical questions in this context: What counts as text? What characterizes different types of texts? And how can this text be used to enhance reading literacy for the secondary school? Answering these questions shape the rest of this chapter.

4.2.1 What counts as text?

Texts may be seen as

> *organized networks that people generate or use to make meanings either for themselves or for others. Texts can be formalized and permanent, reproduced as books or speeches and sold as commodities. Or, they can be informal and fleeting-written lists or notes that are scribbled out and quickly thrown away, or conversations and performances that are made permanent only as they are written or recorded by sound or video devices or passed on orally to others people (Wade & Moje, 2000: 610).*

In a broad sense, text is meant to communicate a message. In other words, texts are means of communicating meaning between authors, speakers, or presenters, on the one hand, and readers, listeners, or viewers on the other. It is worth mentioning that communication has three means of communicating meaning: oral, printed/written, and pictorial/visual. Each means has two aspects; oral (speaking and listening), printed (writing and reading), and pictorial (viewing and representing) (Education Service Centre Region 13, 1998: 40).

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Communication

Listening   Oral   Speaking

Reading   Printed   Writing

Viewing   Pictorial   Representing
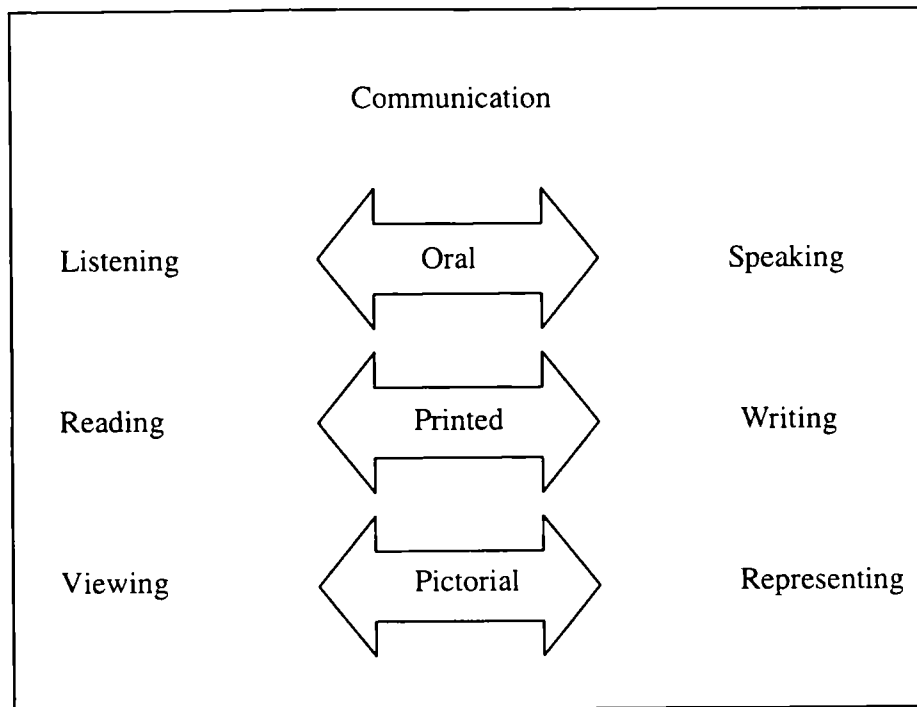
Figure 4.9: Language communication means, from ESCR (1998: 40)

The argument is that what counts as a text includes a wide range of any organized oral, printed/written, or pictorial/visual materials that people generate or use to communicate a message or meaning to each other. In this sense, text includes any

> *published print materials as books, novels, journals, magazines (...); students-generated writings, presentations, and notes; oral discourse constructed in discussions and conversations, electronic materials read and generated on the internet and with hypermedia; television, radio, and film media; and visual and performance art (Wade & Moje, 2000: 617).*

The preceding definition of text broadens the horizons of text to include three main types: written, oral and visual materials. It is worth mentioning that the present research is concerned with written texts as the most important and frequent, and classic type of

text used in teaching and learning of reading literacy. This is consistent with the concept of reading literacy, adopted in the present research, as

the ability to understand and use those written language forms required by society and/or valued by the individual (Mullis et al, 2004: 3).

However, students need to read and familiarize themselves with visual/pictorial texts: graphs, tables, charts, and maps and these types of texts are often printed if not hand produced texts. In addition, oral communication is important as interaction between students, teachers, and written texts within the classroom context helps support learning. Thus, the following discussion is concerned with written texts and what characterizes these texts and how these written texts can be used to communicate meaning between authors, on the one hand, and readers on the other.

4.2.2 Characteristic features of texts

The question which arises in this context is: what kind of written texts can be used as content for a reading literacy curriculum? And why? In other words, what are characteristic features of such written texts? The argument is that written texts are different and distinguished according to the language they are revealed with, or the organization they are interwoven in. Thus,

three different types of text features that are important for a teacher to consider every time a new reading lesson is planned. These types or groupings of text features are:

1. text structure- the way the ideas in a selection have been organized;

2. vocabulary- the labels for ideas and concepts;

3. reader's aids- the variety of pictorial, graphic, typographic, and structural representations used to convey information (PSDE, 1997: 12).

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From another perspective, written texts are different according to the purpose they serve. Broadly speaking, expository texts mainly aim to inform, and narrative texts, on the other hand, mainly aim to entertain.

Narratives are stories. Stories are often written to entertain and excite (...) Expository text is designed to interpret, explain, or appraise (Dymock, 1999: 176-177).

However, it can be argued that narrative texts not only entertain but also may provide a plenty of information. In the meantime, readers may enjoy reading expository or informational texts.

Psychological models of text comprehension have traditionally focused on two major types of texts: expository texts, which comprise textbooks, training manuals, software documentation, and so forth; and narrative texts, whose purpose is more to entertain than to inform (Weaver & Kintsch, 1996: 230).

Moreover, Alexander and Jetton (2000: 290) add that "the three garnering attention in the research are narrative, expository, and mixed texts". Although the predominance of expository and narrative texts as broad categories, there are many other types of texts e.g. instructions, persuasion, review, story, or recount/biography (Calfee & Curley, 1984; Green, 2006).

The argument is that any written text aims at either to inform or entertain or both and can be classified according to the predominant purpose(s).

In addition, written texts are distinct according to the structure or design. The argument is that that every single text has its own structure and follows a certain organizational pattern. According to Meyer and Rice (1984) text structure refers to

how the ideas in a text are interrelated to convey a message to a reader. Some of the ideas in the text are of central importance to the author's message, while others are of less importance. Thus, text structure specifies the logical connections among ideas as well as subordination of some ideas to others (p. 319).

In the same direction, Taylor (1992) refers to text structure as an

organization of ideas in text. It includes the general organizational plan authors follow as they are writing (...) Text structure also includes organizational patterns spanning several paragraphs that are selected by author to make points or communicate information (...) Text structure also includes an author's interweaving of main points and supporting details (p. 221).

The argument is that there are some organizational patterns that good authors follow and good readers analyze. According to Meyer and Rice (1984) there are three main levels at which a structure of text can be analyzed.

The first is sentence or micropropositonal level, which is concerned with the way of sentences cohere and are organized within a text. The second is the paragraph or macropropositional level, which pertains to issues of logical organization and argumentation. The third is that of the top-level structure of the text as a whole (p. 325).

The present discussion is concerned with the top-level structure. In this vein, Dymock (1999) adds that

top-level structures are like an architect's drawings and are the designs into which text content will fit. These designs will differ according to the content materials (e.g. research reports, narratives, descriptive texts, argument texts) (p. 175).

It can be argued that every written text follows a certain organizational or structural pattern, and authors should write accordingly and readers should be aware of these patterns as they read. In addition, expository texts, on the one hand, follow common organizational patterns e.g. descriptive structures that involve: listing, webbing, or compare-contrast patterns and sequential structures that include: time-order relations, cause-effect, branching tree, or problem-solution. On the other hand, narrative texts have their organizational patterns that involve: setting, theme, plot, and resolution (Calfee & Curley, 1984; Taylor, 1992; Dymock, 1999, 2005).

From another angle, texts are different in the language they reveal. Green (2006) refers to ten types of texts and each of which has its own language these are: informational, persuasion, instructions, explanation, recount, reviews, argument, narrative, playscripts, and poetry. In informational text, for example,

> *the writing is largely factual, written in the present tense and contains technical vocabulary (...) pictures, maps and other visual features to engage the reader and present the information clearly. Headings and sub-headings (Green, 2006: 5).*

In addition, it can be argued that texts differ according to the medium i.e. books, newspapers, electronic materials, internet resources, story, reviews, adverts, or playscript. Also, texts differ accordingly with the topic or the field e.g. health, literature, sport, or social sciences. The point to be made in this context is stressing the importance of ICT-based texts or digital reading materials as a very important type of text in the era of computer and internet. The significance of this type of text comes as students expose to such type of text on every single day.

Fleming and Steven (2004: 179) argue that ICT-based texts or electronic texts help students to move from one topic to another through hyperlinks facility and to update and edit text regularly through web-based publications. In other words, these electronic texts raise the interaction between students and texts they read and reading can be guided

according to student's pace and level. Moreover, they employ new symbols e.g. flashing and animation which facilitate communicating meaning (Wray, 2004).

To sum up, written texts are different in terms of:
1. The means of communication e.g. books, adverts, newspapers, or digital texts.
2. The language e.g. vocabulary, style, or different aids they reveal;
3. The organizational design they are connected with e.g. listing, story, or cause and effect;
4. The purposes they serve e.g. inform, or entertain.
5. The topic e.g. health, literature, or social sciences.

The point to be made is that all these types of texts described above are much interplayed. In other words, written text (e.g. a story) may be literary in its language, narrative in its design, and joyful in its purpose. In the meantime, it may include some factual information. The following figure depicts main features of written texts.
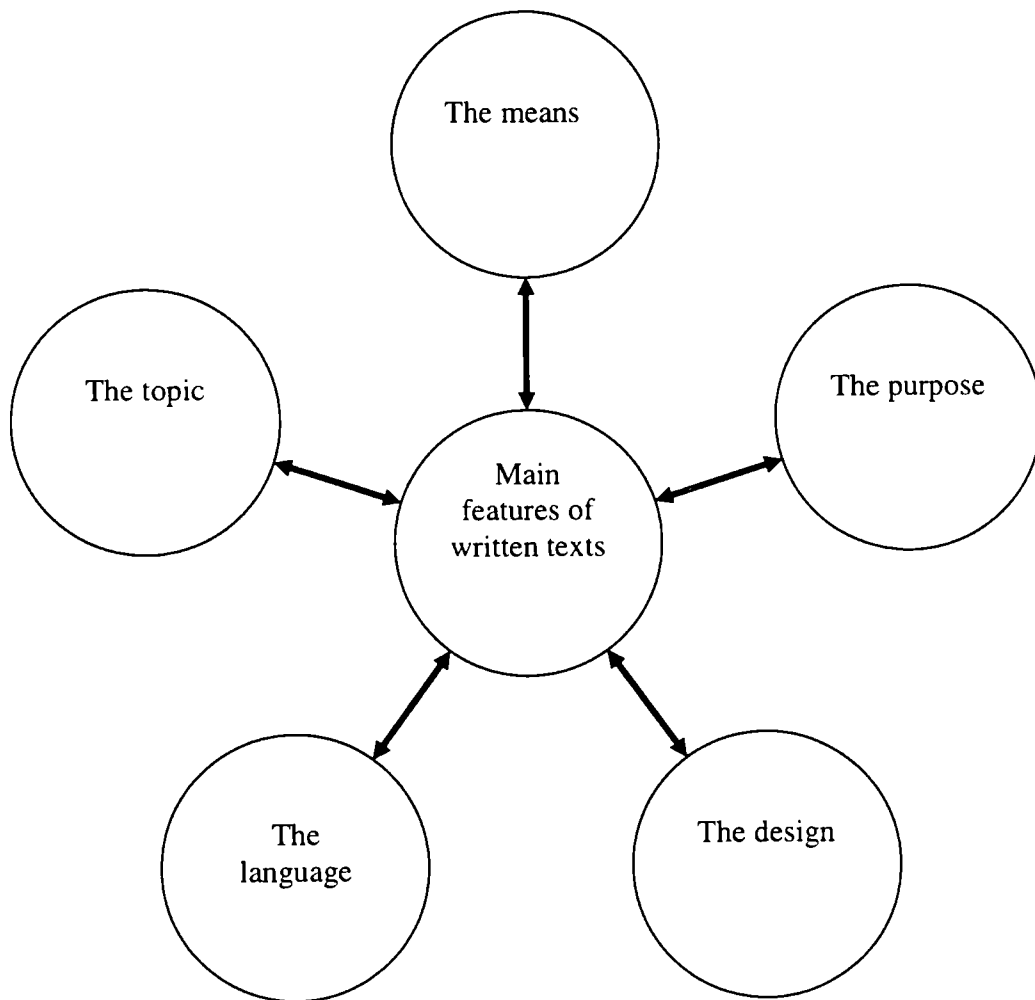
Figure 4.10: Characteristic features of written texts

The other issue to be stressed is that it is very important for the content of a reading literacy curriculum to include different types of written texts that students encounter and deal with in their lives in and out of school. In other words, students need, in the first instance, to be familiar with text as a means of communicating meaning and this meaning can be communicated using different organizational designs, using a variety of languages and styles, and serving different purposes. This helps students to construct

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meaning from different types of texts. Using different types of texts enhances students' knowledge and awareness of that texts which

> *enables highly efficient top-down text processing in the meaning constructing processes. More-skilled readers are highly effective in using text structure strategies in immediate and delayed recall of text information (Ruddell & Unrau, 2004: 1481-1482).*

This point leads to discuss the significance of written text in reading literacy process.

4.2.3 The significance of text to reading literacy

The issue here is: why is text so important? In other words, does students' awareness of different types of text influence their reading literacy? Taylor (1992) indicates that teaching text structure has an effective role in reading comprehension as he says:

> *on the positive side, elementary and secondary students who are taught to identify the structure of expository and narrative text have been found to have better comprehension than students who have not received such instruction (p. 222).*

The same meaning is stressed by Dymock (1999) as she argues that students' comprehension depends on their knowledge and awareness of text structure or lack of it,

> *pupils can read a multitude of different text types and not comprehend them very well because they are unaware of their various structures. However, if they have an understanding of different text types, they will know what to look for in order to create a better mental representation of meaning of the text (p. 175).*

Furthermore, Meyer and Rice (1984) point out that

texts are obviously more organized than lists of sentences or ideas, and understanding their organization can shed light on important aspects of the reading process (p. 319).

In practice, many experimental studies indicate the effectiveness of teaching text structures in reading comprehension for native and non-native readers (Carrell, 1984; Meyer et al. 1980, 1987; Troyer, 1994; Dymock, 1998, 2005; Chang, 2002; Williams, 2005). Still an important point that deserves to be mentioned is that

knowledge about how narrative and expository text is structured will not guarantee comprehension but having a clear understanding of how text is structured may help the reader to build a coherent model of text. Teaching children how to identify these structures, therefore, may improve their overall comprehension of text material (Dymock, 1999: 181).

In addition, Carrell (1984) points out that

from the perspective of schema theory, reading comprehension is a function of the reader's processing and activating the appropriate formal and content schemata in interaction with text (or more specifically with the linguistic cues the author of a text has put there). Comprehension failures may be due partly to the reader's lacking the appropriate schemata required by the text (p. 105).

Moreover,

Development of appropriate schemata can be enhanced by viewing the texts to be read as belonging to different genres and sub-genres. The isolation of the features of the genre can then allow the creation of a pedagogic framework for the enhancement of reading efficiency and efficacy (Malmkjaer and Anderson, 1991: 180).

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It can be argued that there is a relationship between students' prior knowledge/schemata of text structure and reading literacy understanding (Swales, 1990: 84), and this relationship can be depicted as follows:

```
            ┌─────────────────────────────┐
 ┌─────────→│   Prior Schemata (Content,  │←─────────┐
 │          │   Formal, Cultural Schemata)│          │
 │          └─────────────────────────────┘          │
 │                        ↕                           │
 │          ┌─────────────────────────────┐          │
 │          │      Formal Schemata         │          │
 │          └─────────────────────────────┘          │
 │                        ↕                           │
 │          ┌─────────────────────────────┐          │
 │          │      Reader's existing       │          │
 │          │    knowledge about text      │          │
 │          │        structures            │          │
 │          └─────────────────────────────┘          │
 │                        ↕                           │
 │          ┌─────────────────────────────┐          │
 └─────────→│     Contributing factor in   │←─────────┘
            │     Reading understanding     │
            └─────────────────────────────┘
```
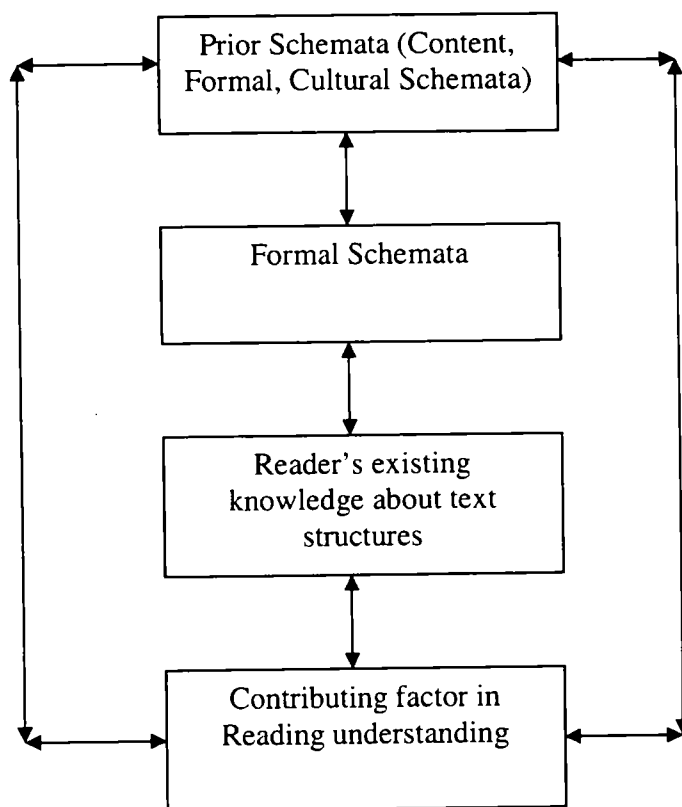
Figure 4.11: Relationship between schemata of text structures and reading comprehension

All that has been discussed above helps explain the significance of text structure in creating mental pictures of and recalling information stated in a text. This in turn can improve understanding and the construction of meaning from text. The point to be made here is that exposure to different types of texts as reading literacy content can improve reading fluency, strategic reading, and reading engagement. The argument is that reading and exposure to different types of texts familiarizes students with different vocabularies, languages and styles of these texts. This in turn helps students to be more

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automatic, accurate, and speedy in their reading. Furthermore, awareness of different types of texts and their structures might make students more strategic in their reading since they can fit their reading strategy to the type of text being read. Above all, awareness of type of text may help students to engage and adopt a suitable stance e.g. efferent or aesthetic.

In other words, fluent readers read different types of texts accurately, expressively and rapidly (ESCR, 1998: 51; McKenna & Stahi, 2003). Also, strategic readers fit their reading strategy to the type of text being read and the purpose for reading it (Harris & Sipay, 1980: 552-553; Al-Naqua & Hafez, 2002: 220; Buzan, 2003). In addition, strategic readers adjust their stance/focus attention to the purpose or to the type of text they encounter. Strategic readers adopt a stance along the efferent-aesthetic continuum (Rosenblatt, 1994, 2004; Many, 1994, 2004; Ruddell & Unrau, 1994, 2004). This point leads to the next critical point that is choosing reading materials/texts.

4.2.4 Choosing reading resources

This section is concerned with a very crucial issue in designing any reading literacy curriculum. It is very important to clarify how reading literacy content (i.e. texts) can be chosen. From the foregoing discussion, reading written texts need to be varied in terms of their design, language, purpose, means, or topic/field as stated earlier. Broadly speaking, any reading materials needs to be consistent with general principles for choosing the curriculum content, chief among them:

1. The content should reflect the curriculum targets;
2. It should be of interest and importance for students;
3. It should meet difference among students;
4. It should be related to reality and students' everyday lives (Younis, 2007).

So, choosing reading materials needs to consider the nature of reading literacy itself, students' interests and needs, and communities' needs where reading literacy is being taught. This agrees with the concept of reading literacy, adopted in the present research, as

the ability to understand and use those written language forms required by society and/or valued by the individual. (...) Readers can construct meaning from a variety of texts. They read to learn, to participate in communities of readers in school and everyday life, and for enjoyment (Mullis et al, 2004: 3).

Two very important issues still need to be clarified: students' choice over reading materials and the authenticity of these materials. To become interested, students need to be given freedom of choice over the materials they read. However, caution is needed since what students want may not match what they need (Younis, 2007). Therefore, the choice of texts should strike a balance between what students want (their choice) and what they need (designer's or teacher's choice). In this respect, it is very useful to make a list of suggested readings and students and teacher can use it to choose from to establish a reading literacy curriculum. Once again, this list should involve different types of texts as discussed above.

Regarding authenticity of texts, it can be argued that students need to be exposed to natural or authentic texts i.e. texts written in its own context. In other words, when authors or writers write these texts they are not aiming at a simplified version for learning purposes. This is very important as students face authentic text in the context of their lives naturally e.g. reading a book in a public library, reading an instruction manual for a new computer, reading a newspaper, reading an underground map, or even browsing the internet. Non-authentic or simplified textbooks isolate students from the natural reading context of social life. In this regard, Honeyghan (2000) creates an exhaustive list of authentic texts or 'environmental print' and advocates its usefulness in reading instruction and its importance in linking students to their social life and communities.

The greatest strength of authentic texts lies in their ability to provide the latest tools or most current information to challenge the reader and encourage life-long reading where students read for real reasons (Honeyghan, 2000: 5).

In addition, Geltrich Ludgate and Tovar (1987) set out lists of authentic texts and explain how teachers can use them to promote foreign language learning. They argue that the importance of these authentic texts is the make learning more realistic. In other words, they relate students to real life and then make learning meaningful.

Students'
interests and
needs

Choosing
reading
materials

Social life
demands

Nature of
reading
targets
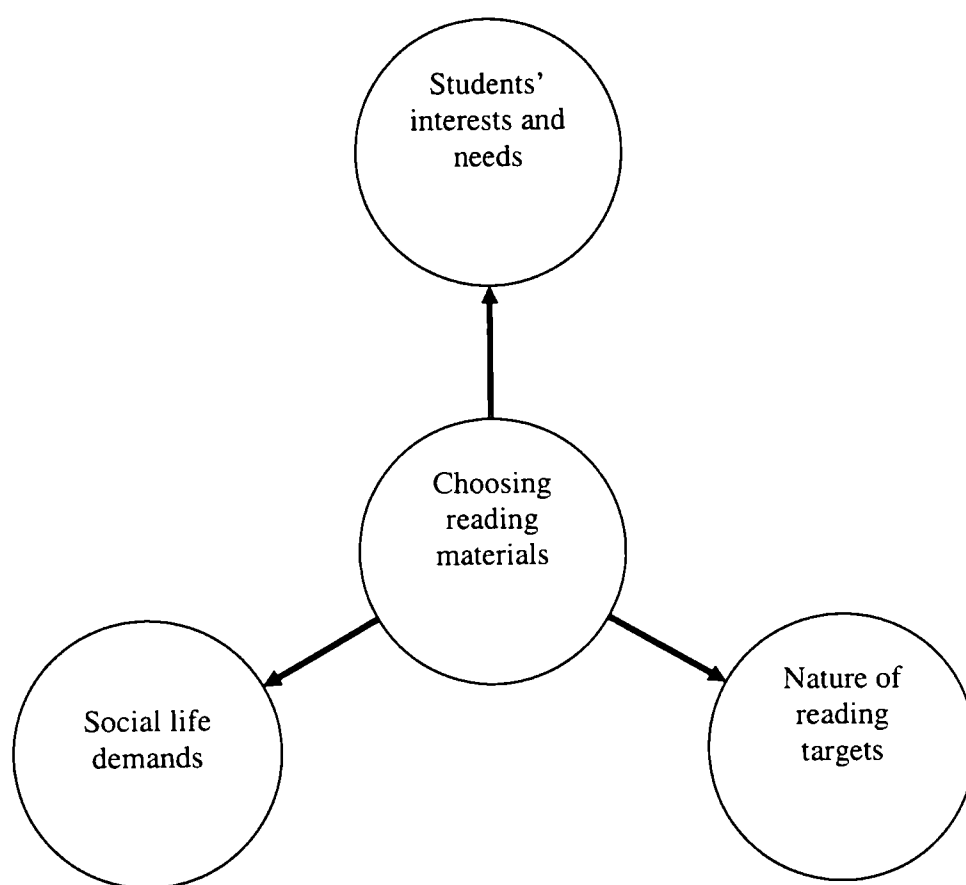
Figure 4.12: Criteria for choosing reading content

So, reading texts should be of interest and importance for students and also meet their needs. In addition, chosen texts depend upon the purpose for reading or what reading

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target the instruction wants to achieve. Above all, chosen materials need to consider social life demands which, again links students to their life and makes reading more interesting, important and effective in students' everyday lives. This is at the heart of reading literacy concept referred to earlier. A further point deserves to be mentioned here is: all reading materials/texts should be revealed in ASL since it is the language used in writing (See chapter one, Arabic language).

CHAPTER FIVE: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

5.0 Introduction

It is postulated that the research methodology is the most crucial component of and the backbone of the research because the quality of and the suitability of the methodology being employed result in the quality of and accuracy of the data to be gathered and used to answer the research questions and to solve its problem. Consequently, this chapter is concerned with clarifying the context in which the current research methodology is adopted and shedding light on the chosen methods in terms of, their terminologies; types; merits and limitations; construction, and administration. It is worth mentioning before embarking into details to refer to the fact that the term methodology, in the present research, involves the research structure or design and methods which are planned and devised to answer its questions and solve its problem. Additionally, the researcher intends to re-state the research questions as a base for developing the research methodology.

Questions for the research

The following questions were to be answered:

1. How might the curriculum of reading in secondary school in Egypt reflect new trends in reading theory and practice?

2. What might the proposed RLCD for secondary school students (14-17 year-old) in Egypt look like? The answer to this main question can be shaped through answering four sub-questions as follows:

   - What should be taught (targets) in reading literacy curriculum for secondary school students in Egypt?

   - What types of texts (content) should be available through this curriculum?

   - How can reading literacy be taught (instruction) in secondary school in Egypt?

   - How can reading literacy be assessed (assessment)?

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3. To what extent would the proposed reading literacy curriculum design be accepted in practice?

Before embarking on discussing the methodology followed in the present research, there is an important issue deserves to be mentioned that is: these research questions can be answered by an 'armchair research'. In other words, they could be answered by working in a library without doing an empirical work. The argument is: why does the researcher need to conduct an empirical fieldwork in the present research? The reasons behind carrying out the fieldwork in the present research are as follows:

1. The present research is concerned with planning and designing a curriculum of reading in Arabic language as a first language for secondary students in Egypt, and most of the literature analysis is from English context. There are differences between the two contexts: English milieu and Egyptian context. Thus, the researcher intends to make sure whether the Egyptian practitioners (i.e. Arabic language teachers and supervisors in secondary school) and professionals (i.e. specialists in curriculum and instruction) would agree with reading theory and practice from another context.

2. To find out to what extent the proposed reading literacy curriculum design would be accepted in practice (practitioners and professionals). This would reveal the degree of readiness and engagement in the implementation of the proposed curriculum.

3. To get more confidence in the gathered data by triangulation i.e. using different methods: the questionnaire and the semi-structured interview to investigate the same topic.

4. To understand the experiences of people involved in education and in this case, Arabic language teachers and supervisors at secondary schools in Egypt and some key Egyptian professionals in the field of curriculum and instruction (Arabic language).

The theoretical analysis and the fieldwork are complementary aspects that would help the researcher in planning and designing a new curriculum of reading literacy for secondary students in Egypt.

5.1 The methodology

5.1.1 Introduction

Basically, the researcher intends to clarify what do we mean by the term 'research methodology', and what makes it distinct from the other terms 'research design', and 'research methods'. Answering this question guides the following discussion which mainly aims at shedding light on the research methodology followed in the present research. First of all, the term methodology refers to a

range of approaches used in educational research to gather data which are to be used as a basis for inference and interpretation, for explanation and prediction (Cohen, Manion & Morrison, 2007: 47).

Research methodology, sometimes referred to as research approaches or research styles, is an umbrella of frameworks for conducting research that involves the research skeleton or design and methods followed by the researcher to gather and analyze relevant research data. Two important issues to be raised in this context are: how can we distinguish between the research methodology and the research design and methods, and how do we choose the relevant methodology to carry out the present research? And why? In this vein, Cohen, Manion, and Morrison (2007) say that

in planning research it is important to clarify a distinction that needs to be made between methodology and methods, approaches and instruments, styles of research and ways for collecting data (p. 83).

They distinguish, on the one hand, between the research methodology or approaches, or styles of research from the research methods or instruments on the other hand e.g.

questionnaires, interviews, tests, accounts, and observations, and hence, the research methods or instruments are part of the research methodology. This meaning is also stressed by Bryman (2004) when she points out that

> *a research method is simply a technique for collecting data. It can involve a specific instrument, such as a self-completion questionnaire or a structured interview schedule, participant observation whereby the researcher listens to and watches others (p. 27).*

Moreover, Cohen, Manion, and Morrison (2007) explain the relationship between the research methodology and methods as they state that

> *the decision on which instrument (method) to use frequently follows from an important earlier decision on which kind (methodology) of research to undertake, for example: a survey; an experiment; an in-depth ethnography; action research; case study research; testing and assessment (p. 83).*

This quotation implies that the research methodology involves not only the research methods but also, each methodology requires a certain method(s). In this context, still another term 'the research design' needs to be clarified. Bryman (2004: 27) argues that a research design refers to "a framework for collection and analysis of data". She (2004: 33) refers to five main research designs: "experimental design; cross-sectional or survey design; longitudinal design; case study design; and comparative design". To sum up, the term methodology is an umbrella term that includes research design and methods and each research methodology requires a certain design and specific method(s) in order to gather and analyse relevant research data. The question now is: what is the research methodology followed in the present research? Why was it chosen? The following section will be devoted to answer this critical question.

Making a decision about which methodology will be adapted and followed in conducting a certain piece of research depends on some factors such as, the purpose of

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the research; the type of data to be gathered and analyzed; and the generalization of the results. Bryman (2004) refers to some of these factors as she states that

a choice of research design reflects decisions about the priority being given to a range of dimensions of the research process, these include the importance attached to:

1. Expressing causal connections between variables;

2. Generalizing to larger groups of individuals than those actually forming part of the investigation;

3. Understanding behaviour and the meaning of that behaviour in its specific context;

4. Having a temporal (i.e. over time) appreciation of social phenomena and their interconnections (p. 27).

Basically, research in the sciences of education, according to its aim,

can be broadly categorised under three headings: work which seeks to establish explanations in terms of cause and effect, work which seeks to understand the experience of people involved in education, and work which attempts to create change (Byram & Feng, 2004: 150).

From another angle, it can be broadly classified according to the type of data to be gathered and analysed under two headings: quantitative research which seeks structured data, and qualitative research which seeks semi-structured and unstructured data (Bryman, 2004; Cohen, Manion & Morrison, 2007: 355). However, and according to Byram and Feng (2004) this is a second-order distinction as the research

which is explanatory in purpose can draw on quantitative and qualitative methods and data, as can work which is searching for understanding or attempting to introduce new practices (p. 150).

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The argument is that quantitative and qualitative research are two ways of gathering and analysing data rather than being two different research paradigms or ways of thinking (Byram & Feng, 2004).

Similarly, quantitative and qualitative methods can be merged in a specific project as Bryman (2004: 21) points out that "many writers argue that the two [quantitative and qualitative methods] can be combined within an overall research project". This is the case in the present research which considers quantitative and qualitative as two complementary methods of gathering and analysing data as will be indicated later in this chapter. The issue now is: what do we mean by quantitative and qualitative data? Answering this question sheds light on the data gathering and analyzing methods adapted in the present research. In this vein, quantitative data are

> *much more formal and pre-planned to a high level of detail (...) require all categories and multiple choice questions to be worked out in advance. This usually requires a pilot to try out the material and refine it. Once the detail of this planning is completed, the analysis of the data is relatively straightforward because the categories for analyzing the data have been worked out in advance hence, data analysis is rapid (Cohen, Manion & Morrison, 2007: 355).*

All these principles are applied to the questionnaire as structured or quantitative data gathering method in the present research as will be indicated later in this chapter.

On the other hand, qualitative data are

> *much more end-loaded, that is, it is quicker to commence and gather data because the categories do not have to be worked out in advance, they emerge once they have been collected. However, in order to discover the issues that emerge and to organize the data presentation, the analysis of the data takes considerably longer (Cohen, Manion & Morrison, 2007: 355).*

These principles characterize the semi-structured interview as data gathering method in the present research as will be discussed later in this chapter. The argument is that both quantitative and qualitative methods are two facets of the same coin i.e. they are two complementary sources of data.

From another point of view, Byram and Feng (2004: 150) suggest 'the first-order distinction' which involves two broad headings: the analytical research which searches for explanation or understanding of or precisely investigates 'what is' and the advocacy research which attempts to establish or precisely advocates 'what ought to be' and sometimes implements and evaluates 'what ought to be'. The present research can be categorised as advocacy as it seeks and advocates 'what ought to be' in designing a curriculum of reading literacy in secondary school in Egypt.

Despite this clear distinction in theory, it may be blurred in practice as the analyst may move from investigating 'what is', which is in purpose analytical research, to establish, advocate and intervene to create 'what ought to be'. In the meantime, the advocate may need to investigate 'what is' as a base for advocating and developing or sometimes implementing and evaluating 'what ought to be', which is in purpose advocacy research as the case in the present research. This is explained by Byram and Feng (2004) as they state that

> *it is also self-evident, that the same individuals may work as both researchers and scholars, sometimes investigating what is and sometimes advocating what ought to be (p. 150).*

Therefore, the first order-distinction, analysis and advocacy research, can be merged in a specific project. To sum up, in the sciences of education, there are many methodologies to carry out and conduct a piece of educational research. Making a decision of adapting one and putting away the other or mixing various methods together depends on the purpose of the research and the types of data to be collected. In general, mixing different methodologies is highlighted for better understanding of a case in question.

The search for understanding focuses upon different issues and approaches them
in different ways (...) The approach now takes on qualitative as well as
quantitative aspects (Cohen, Manion & Morrison, 2007: 8).

It can be argued that the present research is an advocacy one in terms of it seeks and advocates 'what ought to be' in designing a curriculum of reading for secondary students in Egypt. In the meantime, it draws on quantitative and qualitative methods as two complementary methods to gather and analyse data. In addition, it is a survey design. The researcher intends to mix different methods to serve the following aims:

1. Getting more confidence in the collected data by "triangulation" of them. This triangulation

    entails using more than one method or source of data in the study of
    social phenomena (Bryman, 2004: 275).

2. Providing different insights into the phenomenon in question i.e. reading literacy curriculum for secondary school. In other words, by a quantitative method, the questionnaire, the researcher intends to get teachers' and supervisors' perception of the importance of the pre-determined reading needs (i.e. targets, content, instruction, and assessment), and by a qualitative method, the semi-structured interview, the researcher intends to get professionals' views about these reading needs.

3. Maximizing the merits of combining both quantitative and qualitative methods and in the meantime minimizing their pitfalls. This is stressed by Bryman (2004) as she explains that adopting such a multi-strategy research

    would seem to allow the various strengths to be capitalised upon and the
    weaknesses offset somewhat (p. 452).

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5.1.2 The research methods

It can be argued that the structured methods e.g. the questionnaire, provide quantitative data whereas the semi-structured methods e.g. the semi-structured interview, give qualitative data. Consequently, the current research will adapt the structured questionnaire as the most widely used structured method (De Vaus, 2002: 94; McMillan & Schumacher, 1997: 252), and the semi-structured interview as the most common semi-structured method for gathering data in the sciences of education (Bogardus, 2003: 83). Thus, the following section will be devoted to discussing what we mean by the questionnaire and the semi-structured interview: their types, merits, limitations, construction, and administration.

The questionnaire

Introduction

The questionnaire "is favored by many in the field of social research where social surveys are regularly conducted to gather information on many aspects of a community" (Wilson & McClean, 1994: 3). The issue arises here is: what does the questionnaire mean? In this vein, Bulmer (2004: XIV) broadens the definition of the questionnaire to include "any structured research instrument which is used to collect social research data in face to face interview; self-completion survey; telephone interview or web survey" The same opinion is stressed by Oppenheim (1992) as he points out that

> *the term questionnaire [is used] fairly loosely to cover postal questionnaires, group or self-administered questionnaires, and structured interview schedule (including telephone interview) (p. 100).*

It might be implied from the preceding quotations that the questionnaire and the interview are the same and hence, what is required here is clarifying the similarities and differences between the questionnaire and the interview as data gathering methods, and how the present research will benefit from these similarities and differences in gathering data regarding reading literacy curriculum design.

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There is an overlap between what the questionnaire entails and what the interview involves as they mainly are a matter of asking questions. However, the remaining fact is that both the questionnaire and the interview is a distinct data gathering method. The questionnaire is completed by the respondents themselves without intervention from the questionnaire conductor whereas the interview is carried out through the interaction between the interviewer and the interviewee(s) either face to face or over the telephone. This meaning is stressed by Cohen, Manion & Morrison (999) as they explain that the interview

> *involves the gathering of data through direct verbal interaction between individuals. In this sense it differs from the questionnaire where the respondent is required to record in some way her responses to set questions (p. 269).*

Furthermore,

> *interviews are essentially vocal questionnaires. The major steps in constructing an interview are the same as in preparing a questionnaire (McMillan & Schumacher, 1997: 263).*

Above all, Baker (1999: 217) indicates that "a questionnaire may be converted into an interview schedule and vice versa". To sum up, the following points can be inferred from the foregoing discussion the following points:

1. Generally speaking, either the questionnaire or the semi-structured interview is data gathering methods by asking questions to get relevant research questions information.

2. To some degree they have similar construction and types as will be discussed later in this chapter.

3. They may have the same content to deal with from different perspectives. In other words to get complementary types of data: qualitative and quantitative, we

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need different techniques for analyzing data they provide as will be clarified later in this chapter.

4. The main difference between them is that the questionnaire is regarded as a self-completion method and the interview is conducted through interaction between the interviewer and the interviewee(s).

Generally speaking, the questionnaire is divided into three types, according to its construction and the data it provides: structured; semi-structured; and unstructured questionnaire. Cohen, Manion, and Morrison (2007) say that:

> between a completely open questionnaire that is akin to an open invitation to 'write what one wants' and a totally closed, completely structured questionnaire, there is a powerful tool of the semi-structured questionnaire (...) the researcher can select several types of questionnaire, from highly structured to unstructured (p. 321).

From another angle, the questionnaire has four types according to the way of its administration that are: postal-questionnaire; self-administered questionnaire; group-administered questionnaire; and internet questionnaire (Oppenheim, 1992: 102-103; Tuckman, 1999; Bryman, 2004; Cohen, Manion & Morrison, 2007: 344). The main point that follows from the types of the questionnaire is that these distinct types provide us with different kinds of data i.e. semi and unstructured questionnaires give qualitative data whereas, structured ones provide quantitative data. However, Bulmer (2004) posits that

> more commonly (...) questionnaires are employed in studies whose purpose is primarily to produce quantitative results, where the result from questionnaire is numerically coded on a question by question basis (p. xv).

Therefore, the researcher adapts the structured questionnaire and intends to benefit from its merits as quantitative method in the present research as it will be indicated in following section. This leads us to discuss pros and cons of the questionnaire as data collection method.

In this context, Moser (1958), Wilson and McClean (1994), McMillan and Schumacher (1997), Oppenheim (1992), and Bryman (2004) argue that the questionnaire, on the one hand, has some merits in comparison to the interview and these are: cheaper and quicker to administer; avoidance of interviewer biases and effects; no interviewer variability; ability to reach respondents who live at widely dispersed addresses or abroad; can be anonymous; and convenience for many respondents.

On the other hand, the questionnaire can not prompt, probe and ask many questions that are not salient to respondents and can not collect additional data or observational data; it is not appropriate for some kinds of respondent (poor literacy); there is a greater risk of missing data; the researcher does not know who answers; there is no control over the questions order; respondents may reply according to social desirability rather than honestly, and there may be low response rates (Moser, 1958; Wilson & McClean, 1994; McMillan & Schumacher, 1997; Oppenheim, 1992; Bryman, 2004).

In addition to considering the merits and the limitations of the questionnaire stated above, the reasons behind adapting the structured questionnaire to gather data in the current research are:

1. The structured questionnaire is a good and a suitable method to collect data from a large number of subjects, as the case here, as implied from what is stated by Cohen, Manion, and Morrison (2000)

> *the larger the size of the sample, the more structured, closed and numerical the questionnaire may have to be, and the smaller the size of the sample, the less structured, more open and word-based questionnaire may be (p. 247).*

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The present research is concerned with gathering data about reading literacy curriculum design (RLCD) for secondary students (14-17 year-old) in Egypt through employing the structured questionnaire on a large sample that consists of Arabic language teachers and supervisors.

2. It helps the researcher to find out to what extent the research population, Arabic language teachers and supervisors at secondary schools in Egypt, agree with the reading theory and practice in terms of reading targets, content, instruction, and assessment.

3. In addition, it shows how important each sub-item on the questionnaire is rated by the respondents on five-point scale (very important, important, less important, not important, undecided), and this indicates the degree of importance of each item on the questionnaire.

4. Furthermore, it indicates what they, the respondents, can add as new items and ideas as they express their thoughts and beliefs about the reading targets, content, instruction and assessment through answering open-ended questions at the end of each section on the questionnaire.

5. Above all, the researcher intends to use the respondents' personal details to find out what these details imply for the present research i.e. respondents' age, sex, qualification, experience, or career and place.

The questionnaire construction

Broadly speaking, since the questionnaire is a matter of asking questions and seeking relevant research information, then, the main issues which arise here are: why do we ask a certain set of questions within a certain questionnaire? How do we ask? How will the respondents respond to these questions? How do we make sure that this questionnaire

produces data which are valid and reliable? In this vein and in a broad sense, McMillan and Schumacher (1997) point out that

the major steps in constructing an interview are the same as in preparing a questionnaire - justification, defining objectives, writing questions, deciding general and item format, and pretesting (p. 263).

This implies that making a justification or an answering the question of 'why' the questionnaire is to be adapted is required as a first and a basic step in planning a questionnaire. Also, both a questionnaire and a semi-structured interview share common main steps in their planning. In addition, Tuckman (1999) and Cohen, Manion and Morrison (2007) indicate that to plan a questionnaire, the researcher needs to handle the following main steps:

1. Identifying the questionnaire purposes or what the researcher intends to find out through employing it as data collection method. This justifies why the researcher adapts the structured questionnaire in the present research.

2. Specifying whom this questionnaire is for or the population and the sample personal details that will be included on the questionnaire as will be discussed late in this chapter.

3. Deciding upon the questionnaire content or the data required (topics, constructs, and concepts) that will be addressed. What is required is operationalzing the research questions in a form appropriate to be addressed on the questionnaire.

4. Deciding upon the questions format and the response modes that provide the data required and answer the research questions.

5. Writing up the questionnaire items.

6. Checking that each issue or topic in the content has been addressed using several questions for each one.

7. Piloting and evaluating it.

8. Administering the final questionnaire.

9. Analyzing the data provided.

10. Reporting the results.

All these steps are taken into account when using the questionnaire. In addition, the researcher considers the following critical considerations when constructing and wording the questionnaire as follows:

1. Attach covering letter (See Appendix B) which involves many critical issues e.g. the research's aim, thanking anticipated cooperation of the respondents and assuring the confidentiality.

2. Operationalize the purposes of the questionnaire carefully.

3. Be simple, clear and brief as possible.

4. Give clear instructions about how to respond.

5. Ask only one thing at a time whenever possible.

6. Avoid leading and threatening questions.

7. Include an extra category i.e. 'undecided' as the respondent may not know the answer.

8. Avoid splitting an item over two pages whenever possible.

9. Employ several items to measure a single or a specific issue or topic.

10. Indicate the response modes required in the open-ended questions (De Vaus, 2002; Bryman, 2004; Cohen, Manion & Morrison, 2007).

Furthermore, there are two main types of questions. Firstly, closed-ended question formats e.g. dichotomous questions; multiple choice questions; ranking orders and rating scales questions. Secondly, open-ended questions. Each type has its merits and limitations, provides different type of data i.e. qualitative or quantitative, and finally requires a certain mode of response e.g. ticking or choosing among alternatives to respond to closed-ended questions and writing in your own terms or talking in your own words in responding to open-ended questions (Oppenheim, 1992; Wilson & McClean, 1994; Cohen, Manion & Morrison, 2000; De Vaus, 2002; Bryman, 2004). The matter of adapting a certain type of questions and identifying a certain mode for response depends on what the investigator wants to find out and which type of data is required.

The questionnaire content

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This section is concerned with operationalizing the research questions in a form appropriate to be addressed as a content of the questionnaire. Eventually, the questionnaire is divided into five sections, one of them is respondents' personal details and the rest are concerned with four issues that operationalize the research question of 'What might the proposed RLCD for secondary school students (14-17 Year-Olds) in Egypt look like? As this question involves four sub-questions as stated above, hence each section on the questionnaire is concerned with operationalizing one of these sub-questions as follows:

1. Section one: reading literacy targets.
2. Section two: reading literacy content.
3. Section three: reading literacy instruction.
4. Section four: reading literacy assessment.

It is worth mentioning that an important component of the questionnaire that is 'the covering letter' needs to be clarified. The covering letter is a crucial component of carrying out the questionnaire as it serves many critical purposes e.g. it makes respondents familiar with the aim of the research in question, indicates how to respond, how important their replies are, and above all assures the confidentiality of respondents' replies. This is indicated by Cohen, Manion, and Morrison (2007) as they point out that

the purpose of covering letter or sheet is to indicate the aim of the research, to convey to respondents its importance, to assure them of confidentiality, and encourage their replies (p. 339).

The researcher takes into his account all these notes when writing up the covering letter as he points out the aim of the research, puts an example of how to respond, indicates the importance of the research, shows appreciation of the respondents' participation, indicates time that should be taken in responding to the questionnaire, thanks the respondents in advance, and assures them the total anonymity of their replies (See appendix B, the questionnaire).

Section one: reading literacy targets

This part of the questionnaire is concerned secondary school teachers' and supervisors' perception of reading literacy targets for secondary school students in Egypt. It is composed of seventeen closed-ended items (Items, 1-17) that are Likert-type where the respondents are asked to rate or tick them on a five-point scale in terms of the degree of the importance of the statement (very important, important, less important, not important, and undecided). In addition, it includes one open-ended item (Item 18) that gives the respondents the opportunity to add freely what they think should be added as reading target for secondary school students and is not covered in the questionnaire. It is worth mentioning that these items are worded in behavioral terms, in other words, it is measurable and specific to help the respondents to give definite answer. The items operationalize the following reading broad targets: reading for meaning, strategic reading, reading fluency, reading engagement, and meta-reading (See appendix B, the questionnaire).

Section two: reading literacy content

This section is occupied by the reading literacy content or types of texts for secondary school students and consists of twelve closed-ended items (Items 19-30) where the teachers and supervisors are asked to rate or tick their choice on a five-point scale in terms of the degree of the importance of the statement as stated above. Moreover, the item (19) refers to a range of texts as the reading content and items (20- 30) refer to different types of texts e.g. narrative and expository texts. In addition, this section contains an open-ended question (Item 31) asking the respondents to specify what they think are the most important five types of text that should be available for secondary school students through reading literacy curriculum (See Appendix B, the questionnaire). It operationalizes the research sub-question of 'What types of texts should be available through this curriculum?'

Section three: reading literacy instruction

This part is concerned with the respondents' perceptions of guidelines for reading literacy instruction for secondary school students and consists of fourteen closed-ended

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items (Items 32-45), where the respondents are asked to rate or tick their answer on a five-point scale in terms of the degree of the importance as indicated above. All these items are derived from analysis in chapter four regarding reading literacy instruction. Furthermore, it involves an open-ended question (Item 46) giving the respondents opportunity to add whatever techniques they think would be helpful in teaching and learning of reading at secondary school (See appendix B, the questionnaire). This section operationalizes the research sub-question of 'How can reading literacy be taught in secondary school in Egypt?'

Section four: reading literacy assessment

This section is occupied by the respondents' perceptions of guidelines for reading literacy assessment for secondary school students and consists of twenty closed-ended (Items 47- 66), where the respondents are asked to rate or tick their answer on a five-point scale in terms of the degree of importance as referred earlier. These items are concerned with reading literacy assessment as discussed in chapter three. In addition, it includes an open-ended item (Item 67) giving the respondents space to write whatever assessment techniques they think should be used in reading assessment at secondary schools (See Appendix B, the questionnaire). It operationalizes the research sub-question of 'How can reading literacy be assessed?'

Section five: respondents' personal details

This section consists of seven closed-ended items all of them about the respondents' personal details i.e. name (optional), age, sex, experience, place of work, position, and qualifications. The researcher puts this section at the end of the questionnaire as the questionnaire is relatively long. It consists of sixty three closed-ended items and four open-ended items in addition to this, it involves six personal items: it gives the respondents the chance to answer the first four sections, which are the main sections, carefully and then, it is effortless to answer the personal questions (See appendix B, the questionnaire).

The semi-structured interview

Introduction

The interview is an integral part of our life, work, and research and so on, and hence there are many types of interviews including these five types: selection; counseling; disciplinary; grievance; and appraisal interview (Warwick, 1989; Cohen, Manion & Morrison, 2007). The present research is concerned with the 'research interview' or the interview as a data collection method in the sciences of education. In this vein, Cannell and Kahn (1968: 527) define the research interview as

> *a two-person-conversation initiated by the interviewer for the specific purpose of obtaining research relevant information, and focused by him [the interviewer] on content specified by research objectives of systematic description, prediction, or explanation (quoted in Cohen, Manion and Morrison, 1999: 269).*

Similar to the questionnaire, the interview also has three main types, according to its construction and the data it provides, these are:

1. Structured interview.
2. Semi-structured-interview.
3. Unstructured interview.

It should be borne in mind that sometimes different researchers and writers use different terms to describe and refer to one type or more of the interview i.e. structured interview referred to as standardized interview; semi-structured interview is sometimes called guided interview; and unstructured-interview is called intensive interview or informal interview. In addition, the terms like qualitative interview; in-depth interview; oral history interview, and life history interview are used to refer to both semi-structured and unstructured interviews (Bryman, 2004; Cohen, Manion & Morrison, 2007). It follows from this that different types of interview provide different kinds of collected data. In other words, structured interviews provide quantitative data whereas, semi-structured and unstructured ones provide qualitative data. Consequently, Bryman (2004) divides

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the interview into two main types: a quantitative interview that entails the structured interview and a qualitative interview that entails the semi-structured interview, unstructured interview, group interviewing/focus groups/focused interview.

According to the way in which the interview is administered, the interview is divided into two main types, these are:

1. Individual interview which involves face-to-face or in personal interview and telephone interview (Baker, 1999; Cohen, Manion & Morrison, 2000; Bryman, 2004).

2. Group interview that also can be referred as a focus group or focused interview (Baker, 1999; Bryman, 2004).

The focus group method of interviewing has been popular as a fairly inexpensive but effective way to get the reactions of a small group of people to a focused issue (Baker, 1999: 224).

In addition to that, the semi-structured interview in the present research is important for many reasons as follows:

1. Unlike the questionnaire, it will be applied to a small number of respondents, some key figures in the field of curriculum and instruction (Arabic language).

2. It gives the interviewees the opportunity to express in depth their thoughts, beliefs, and views about RLCD for secondary school students in terms of its targets, content, instruction, and assessment. Hence, this makes the semi-structured interview more relevant to the present research than the structured interview.

3. To get more confidence in the gathered data by triangulation i.e. using different methods: theoretical analysis and the semi-structured interview to investigate the same topic.

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4. Above all, it helps the researcher to get direct relevant information and gather the required data that answer the research question of 'What might the proposed RLCD for secondary school students (14-17 year-old) in Egypt look like?'

On the other hand, the semi-structured interview has some limitations as they

are expensive in time, they are open to interviewer bias, they may be inconvenient for respondents, issues of interviewee fatigue may hamper the interview, and anonymity may be difficult (Cohen, Manion & Morrison, 2007: 349).

The researcher intends to maximize the benefits from the semi-structured interview as data gathering method and in the meantime, he intends to minimize its limitations and pitfalls. Therefore, the researcher considers some points in using the semi-structured interview in the present research such as:

1. Considering empathy between the researcher and the interviewees.
2. Avoiding leading and sensitive questions.
3. Agreement with the interviewees upon suitable times and comfortable places to conduct the interview.
4. Assuring the interviewees the total anonymity and no harmful effects will come as a result of their participation.

The semi-structured interview planning
In this vein, Kvale (1996), and Cohen, Manion, and Morrison (2007) refer to seven main stages for using the research interview that can be applied to the semi-structured interview adapted in the present research, these are:

1. Thematizing, where the researcher is concerned with formulating the purpose and the content of the interview. In other words, operationalizing the research questions in a form appropriate to the semi-structured interview.

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2. Designing, as the researcher plans and designs the interview considering all the seven stages.

3. Interviewing or conducting the interview according to the interview guide and what is stated in the designing stage.

4. Transcribing, where the researcher is concerned with transcription of the oral speech to written text in preparing for analyzing. It is worth mentioning here that transcription is conducted in Arabic language, the language in which the interview is conducted.

5. Analyzing, where the researcher decides on which method is suitable for analyzing in the light of the gathered data and the purpose and the content of the interview. Also, it is worth mentioning that the analysis is conducted in Arabic language and then translated into English.

6. Verifying, as the researcher has to be ascertained that the interview's results are trustworthy and authentic. The concept of trustworthiness and authenticity and other ethical issues will be discussed late in this chapter.

7. Finally, reporting on the interview's findings in a readable form.

Furthermore, Bryman (2004) stresses that the research interview should reflect the research question(s), in a sense that the semi-structured interview adapted in the present research should operationalise the research questions and analysis should be guided by the research questions. Thus, he (2004: 326) refers to nine stages for planning the semi-structured interviews as follows:

General research area ⟶ Specific research questions ⟶ Interview topics

⟓

Formulate interview questions

⟓

Review/revise interview questions

⟓

Pilot guide

⟓

Identify novel issues

⟓

Revise interview questions

⟓

Finalize guide
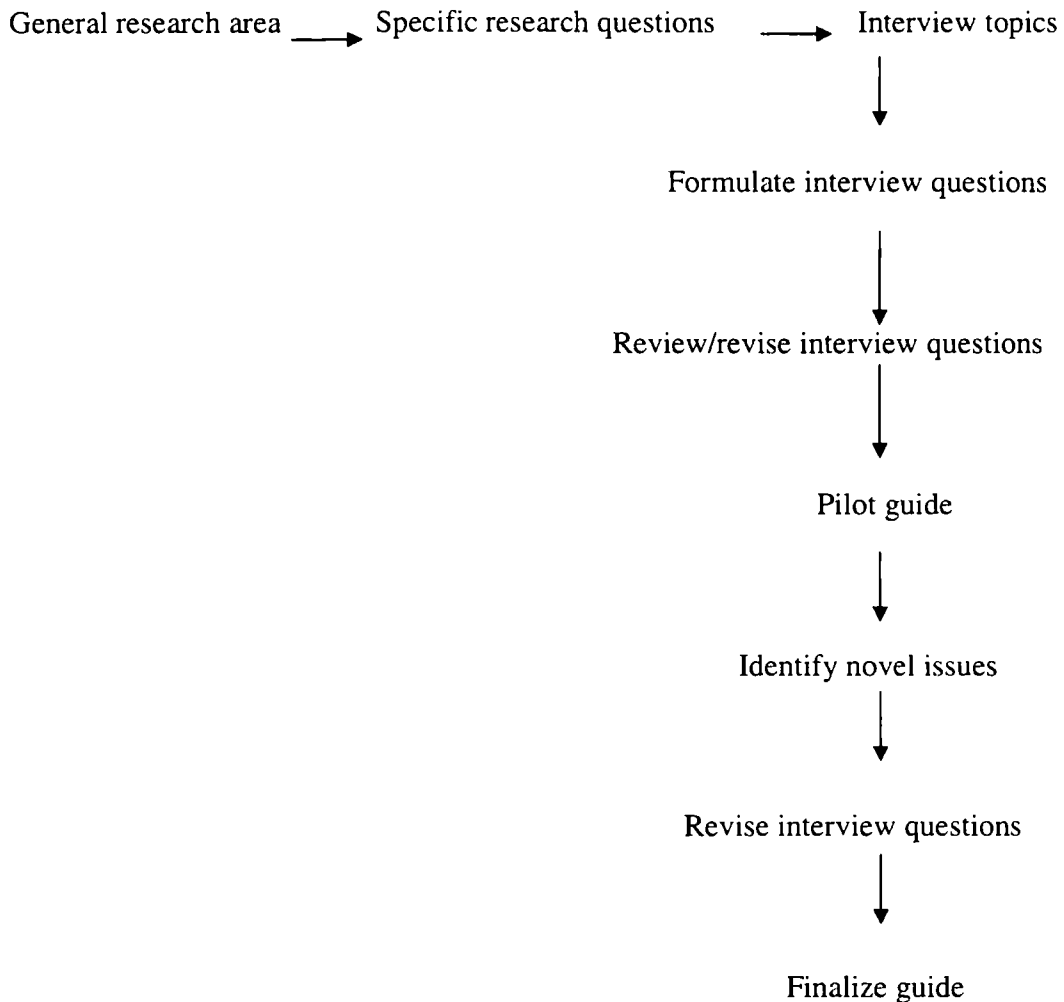
Figure 5.1: Formulating questions for an interview guide, from Bryman (2004: 326).

To sum up, when using the semi-structured interview as data collection method, the researcher needs to consider and clarify all stages from the very beginning. He needs to know the purpose behind using the method; how to design and itemize it; how to make sure it is trustworthy and authentic; how to administer; how to transcribe and code; how to analyze; and how to report the findings. Above all, this method should help directly in answering the research question(s), and achieve its aims.

The semi-structured interview schedule

As the researcher intends to answer the research question of 'What, in the view of different groups of professionals, might the proposed reading literacy curriculum for secondary school students in Egypt look like in terms of its targets, content, instruction, and reading assessment? Consequently, the semi-structured interview adapted in the present research has six sections as content and with each having specific purposes as follows:

Reading literacy targets

This section is concerned with reading literacy targets that should be taught through the curriculum of reading at the secondary schools in Egypt. Hence, the purpose is to elicit the specialists' views of what these targets are and which targets are more important. Therefore, the main questions and the probe questions in this section aim to get complementary data to that gathered by the questionnaire to create a clear picture and background of the reading targets at secondary schools. This would help the researcher to identify the first and the main component, targets, of RLCD at secondary school (See Appendix B, the interview schedule).

Reading literacy content

This section is concerned with identifying the content/types of texts that should be available through RLCD for secondary school students in Egypt. Therefore, the main question and probes are aiming at getting specialists' views of what resources or types of texts should be included as a content of the curriculum of reading at secondary school in Egypt. In addition, it is occupied by specifying what are the most important types of texts that should be given the priority in designing RLCD. This completes the picture about the types of texts and their priorities as ranked by the respondents on the questionnaire (See Appendix B, the interview schedule).

Reading literacy instruction

This section focuses on guidelines that help and facilitate teaching and learning of reading literacy at the secondary schools in Egypt. Consequently, the main purpose of the main and probes questions is giving the opportunity to the specialists to express their

views about the methods, techniques, strategies that are effective in teaching and learning of reading. These data with the data provide by the questionnaire indicate some important methods, strategies, and techniques that teachers can use and to make strategic choices from to facilitate and help in teaching and learning of reading at secondary school in Egypt (See Appendix B, the interview schedule).

Reading literacy assessment

This section is concerned with assessment techniques that should be employed to assess reading at secondary school in Egypt. Thus, the purpose of the main question and probes is eliciting different techniques that should be employed in assessing reading at secondary school in Egypt. Data provide by this section complement the data provided by the questionnaire and then, the researcher can identify reading assessment techniques as a crucial component of RLCD at secondary school (See Appendix B, the interview schedule).

General questions

This section has two general questions. The purpose of the first question is to elicit the specialists' views about the general principles that should be considered when planning and designing the curriculum of reading for secondary school in Egypt. These data provide the researcher with important information that he might not know regarding RLCD. The second and the last question is where the interviewer gives the interviewee(s) a chance to express any relevant data to the interview content or topics.

It is worth mentioning that there is a consent form that is signed by the interviewees before interviewing and this form indicates data anonymity and all tape-recordings will be used only for the purpose of the research and will be destroyed after it has finished. Also, the form shows that the present research has been ethically approved by Durham University, where the research is being conducted. In addition, it guarantees that all interviewees are fully aware of the nature and purposes behind the present research (See Appendix B, the interview's consent form).

5.1.2 The pilot study

Bryman (2004: 159) points out that

> *pilot studies may be particularly crucial in relation to research based on the self-completion questionnaire, since, there will not be an interviewer present to clear up any confusion. Also, with interviews, persistent problems may emerge after a few interviews have been carried out and these can then be addressed (p. 159).*

It follows that piloting is an important issue for the questionnaire or even the structured interview, in the meantime, it can be implied that there is no need to pilot the semi-structured interview as the researcher will be there to clarify any ambiguities and will guide the interviewee(s) in a flexible way that allows him to make sure that all interviewees understand the questions in the same way and to cover all topics or issues in questions through asking open-ended questions that allow interviewees to add whatever they think is important and relevant to the interview topic(s). However, the researcher conducted three pre-interviews with specialists in the field of curriculum and instruction (Arabic language) in Egypt to enrich his experience about how to conduct the interview and how to overcome problems that may arise e.g. how to avoid leading questions, how to ask probe questions when the interviewee(s) dries up, and to avoid talking too much and give the interviewee(s) the opportunity to express their thoughts, ideas and opinions.

On the other hand and according to Oppenheim (1992), Wilson and McLean (1994), Kgaile and Morrison (1996), Bryman (2004), and Cohen, Manion, and Morrison (2007), piloting the questionnaire principally aims at increasing clarity, readability, validity, reliability and practicality of the questionnaire and therefore, the researcher pilots the questionnaire in order to achieve the following important objectives:

1. Seeking clarity and lack of ambiguity of the questionnaire's format, items, wording, instructions, and covering letter and eventually, ensuring the readability of the questionnaire for Arabic language teachers and supervisors at secondary schools in Egypt.

2. Checking the time taken to answer the questionnaire through calculating the mean of the time taken by the respondents in the pilot study.

3. Ensuring the reliability of the questionnaire through conducting it on a small-scale sample (30 teachers and supervisors) other than the main sample and then analyzing the data it provides by using Cronbach's Alpha technique to get the reliability as will be discussed later in this chapter (See the quality of the research methods).

4. Ensuring the validity (face and content validity) of the questionnaire through giving it to seven specialists (university staff) in the field of curriculum and instruction (Arabic language) and in addition to teachers and supervisors mentioned. This is to check its appearance, coverage and operationalization and to add any additional items needed to be addressed as will be indicated later in this chapter (See the quality of the research methods).

5. Checking the practicality of the questionnaire or whether it is possible and reasonable in terms of time and cost to be handed out, answered and then handed in.

Eventually, the researcher hands out the questionnaire to this pilot sample and ask them to answer all the items and write down any suggestions that the researcher should take into his consideration in order to make this questionnaire more understandable, valid, reliable and sound instrument.

5.1.3 The quality of the research methods

First of all, it should be borne in mind that the researcher should do her/his best to get valid and reliable or trustworthy and authentic research methods and therefore, every attempt should be done to reduce threats to validity, reliability or trustworthiness and authenticity. However,

It is unwise to think that threats to validity and reliability can ever be erased completely; rather, the effects of these threats can be attenuated by attention to validity and reliability throughout a piece of research (Cohen, Manion & Morrison, 2007: 133).

The main critical issue requires to be clarified here is: what do the validity and reliability or trustworthiness and authenticity mean? And if so, how can the researcher address them in the present research?

Regarding validity and reliability, in simple and broad words, a valid method, e.g. the questionnaire, measures what it purports to measure and a reliable method provides similar results if it is applied to a similar group of respondents over the time and under the same circumstances (De Vaus, 2002; Bryman, 2004; Cohen, Manion & Morrison, 2007). However, these concepts are not very simple and straightforward. They are multi-faceted and have different types and thus, they can be addressed using several ways and techniques (Cohen, Manion & Morrison, 2000: 105).

Seeking the reliability can be addressed by using different techniques e.g. getting similar results through employing the same method, e.g. the questionnaire, on a similar sample twice over a period of time (stability) and through employing the method once and splitting it into two halves and finding out the correlation between them (internal consistency) (Bryman, 2004; Cohen, Manion & Morrison, 2000: 117). The same applies to the validity and therefore, there are many techniques to be addressed when considering whether a measure is valid or not e.g. face validity in which the method superficially and apparently reflects the content of the topic(s) in question (Bryman, 2004: 73); the content validity in which the measure exhaustively and comprehensively covers the topic(s) that it purports to cover (Cohen, Manion & Morrison, 2007: 137); and jury validity whereby the measure is judged by some of the experts in the field in question in terms of suitability of its content to the topic(s) and how its content

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operationalizes the topic(s) under investigation, accuracy of its language, and its clarity of and lack of ambiguity. Jury validity includes face and content validity.

Furthermore, there is internal validity which refers to what extent the gathered data and the findings of a piece of research explain and describe accurately the issue under investigation e.g. in experimental design, the researcher should ensure that her/his independent variable (s), at least in part, causes and impacts dependent one(s). On the other hand, the external validity refers to the extent whereby the findings of a piece of research can be generalized to the wider population (Cohen, Manion & Morrison, 2007: 135-136). Also, it is worth mentioning here that

> *at the very minimum, a researcher who develops a new measure should establish that it has face validity (...) Face validity is, therefore, an essentially intuitive process (Bryman, 2004: 73).*

A further point is that validity and reliability are closely related to each other. In other words, validity presumes reliability and thus, a reliable measure is not necessarily a valid one however, a valid measure is a reliable one. Thus, reliability is a pre and insufficient condition of validity (Bryman, 2004: 74; Cohen, Manion & Morrison, 2000: 105). The relevant issue now is: how does the researcher address the validity and the reliability of his questionnaire in the present research? First and foremost, the researcher distributed the questionnaire to seven experts (university staff) in the field of curriculum and instruction (Arabic language) and asked them to judge the questionnaire in terms of:

1. Its suitability at superficial level (face validity) to the topics in question. In other words, does it seem to measure at facial level the topics under investigation i.e. reading literacy targets, content, instruction, and assessment?

2. To what extent it operationalizes (content validity) the content of the topics in question, or do its items exhaustively and comprehensively cover the topics under research?

3. Checking its clarity and lack of ambiguity in terms of its format, items, wording, and instructions and eventually, ensuring its readability for the targeted respondents.

4. To write down any suggestions and recommendations they think are relevant to and improve the questionnaire to measure what it should do and to be more understandable and readable by the targeted respondents.

As consequence, the researcher introduced some amendments in light of experts' comments and recommendations e.g. he changed some words, added some items, and merged others.

It is worth mentioning that through ensuring the questionnaire's clarity, operalionalization, and reflection of the topics in question, it is eventually internally valid as the researcher can be confident with the data it provides. Since these data explain and describe accurately what the respondents' (Arabic language teachers and supervisors at secondary schools) views and beliefs are about the topics under investigation. Above all, the findings of this questionnaire can be generalized to the wide population (all general secondary schools in Egypt) as it depends on a representative sample (Ismailia district) that represents all Egyptian education districts as will be discussed later in this chapter (See population and sampling). Hence, it can be argued that the questionnaire is externally valid as well.

On the other hand, the questionnaire was handed out to thirty Arabic language teachers and supervisors at secondary school in Egypt other than the sample of the main study. The respondents were asked to answer all questions and write down the time taken to answer and in addition, write down any comments they may have on the questionnaire wording, instructions, format, and items. Hence, the researcher got back the responses and handled the following points:

1. Identifying the time taken to answer the questionnaire (about twenty minutes) by calculating the mean of the time taken by all the respondents.

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2. Making some minor amendments in wording to be more readable and understandable by the respondents.

3. Finding out the questionnaire reliability by using Cronbach's Alpha technique.

> *it essentially calculates the average of all possible split-half reliability coefficients. A computed alpha coefficient will vary between 1 denoting perfect internal reliability and 0 denoting no internal reliability. The figure .80 is typically employed as a rule of thumb to denote an acceptable level of internal validity (Bryman, 2004: 72).*

By using SPSS software (15.00) for windows alpha coefficient was found as follows: Cronbach's Alpha = .961 and it is very acceptable and thus the researcher ensured that his questionnaire is a reliable one. It can be argued that this high coefficient came as a result of the validity of the questionnaire as validity presumes reliability, as indicated above.

The terms validity and reliability discussed above are applicable to quantitative methods such as the structured questionnaire. However, there is a debate about the applicability of these terms to qualitative methods such as the semi-structured interview. Therefore, the following section will be devoted to discussing this issue.

In this vein, some methodologists apply validity and reliability concepts to the qualitative research with slight change in the meaning and this stance was supported by LeCompte and Goetz (1982) and Mason (2002: 39). From different point of view, Lincoln and Guba (1985) suggest trustworthiness as an alternative criterion for assessing the quality of qualitative research or 'naturalistic inquiry', which involves the following four elements:

1. Credibility which means to what extent the research findings can be trusted and accepted to others. In other words, does the researcher conduct the research

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according to the canons of good practice and get a confirmation that the research findings explain and describe accurately the topic(s) under investigation using appropriate techniques e.g. triangulation. This parallels the internal validity as stated above.

2. Transferability in which the researcher

> *can provide only the thick description necessary to enable someone interested in making a transfer to reach a conclusion about whether transfer can be contemplated as a possibility (Lincoln & Guba, 1985).*

Thus, it differs from the external validity in the quantitative research which can be precisely reported.

3. Dependability whereby the researcher keeps in detailed and accessible manner complete records of all research phases and data to be debriefed by an auditor(s) or peer(s) to check whether the research has been conducted according to the canons of good practice and proper procedures have been followed and hence same interpretations, findings and conclusions can be drawn by auditor(s). This parallels the notion of reliability or the idea of consistency and replication in quantitative research.

4. Confirmability whereby the researcher acts in a good faith and makes every attempt to avoid bias and personal beliefs or values or theoretical inclinations that sway intently and manifestly the research conduct and findings and this can be achieved by auditor(s) as well. This parallels objectivity in quantitative research.

The foregoing point of view is stressed by Cohen, Manion, and Morrison (2007) as they point out that

in qualitative data validity might be addressed through the honesty, depth, richness and scope of the data achieved, the participants approached, the extent of triangulation and the disinterestedness or objectivity of the researcher (p. 133).

Establishing the trustworthiness requires employing many techniques to be addressed mainly triangulation and auditing and it is not easy to employ such techniques in terms of time and cost. Qualitative methods e.g. semi-structured interview, produce a huge amount of data which is, practically, difficult for auditors to debrief them. In addition, and as Bryman (2004) indicates qualitative research seeks for the uniqueness, depth and contextual understanding rather than generalization and therefore, it is difficult to be audited and replicated.

It is very important to explain practical procedures taken to ensure the quality of the semi-structured interview adapted in the present research. The researcher makes every attempt to ensure the trustworthiness of the semi-structured interview as follows:

1. Avoiding bias as much as he can e.g. avoiding leading questions or interference with the interviewees answer.

2. Formulating questions carefully and making them very clear and understandable in the same way by the interviewees.

3. Posing an open-ended question at the end of the interview asking the interviewees to add whatever they think is relevant to the interview's topic(s). This question covers any pitfalls in the interview operationalizing of the research questions.

4. Using triangulation of methods as the researcher employs the theoretical analysis, the questionnaire and the semi-structured interview to gather data on the same topic i.e. RLCD for secondary students in Egypt.

5. Piloting the interview schedule with three people to gain more experience on how to conduct such interview and how to tackle any problems that may arise e.g. how to ask probes when an interviewee dries up.

5.2 The ethics of the research

It is common understanding among researchers in education that some potential ethical problems should be considered in carrying out any piece of education research, the field of the present research, particularly when it approaches human being as subjects and every attempt should be made to adhere to these ethics. In this respect and according to Durham University Code of Practice (DUCP), in which the present research is being conducted, all education research should be conducted within an ethic of respect for persons, knowledge, democratic values and quality of education research.

In this vein, there are three dimensions of education research ethics that are relevant to and should be considered in the present research. Firstly, ethics for the research profession that should be considered through the course of conducting the research in general, such as adherence to integrity and autonomy e.g. reporting clearly, avoiding bias, telling the truth, making data available for checking, and avoiding plagiarism. Precisely, and as stated in DUCP that education researchers should:

1. *Avoid fabrication, falsification or misrepresentation of evidence, data, findings or conclusions.*

2. *In case study and evaluative research, actively seek and include data and evidence provided by all relevant stakeholders.*

3. *Report their findings to all relevant stakeholders and avoid selective communication of findings.*

4. *Report research conceptions, procedures, results, and analysis accurately and in sufficient detail for other researchers to understand and interpret them.*

5. *Never knowingly, omit reference to any relevant work by others (Durham University, 2004).*

Secondly, when the researcher approaches human beings as participants or assistants or even as research partners he should do his best, on the one hand, to preventing any maleficences, hazards, and harmful effects of the research that may affect them such as, invading their right to privacy e.g. releasing or misusing their personal information; coercing or forcing them to participate; deceiving them to get information that they will not provide if they have been told the truth about the nature of the research or the data to be collected; and disadvantaging any participant by her/his race, gender, religion or political beliefs or disability. On the other hand, ensuring and clarifying beneficences to them e.g. to explain them what benefits they gain or the value of carrying out research; and fully acknowledge all those who contribute to and help in research at any stage.

In this vein, Kavle (1996), Tuckman (1999), Bryman (2004), Durham Univeristy (2004) and Cohen, Manion and Morrison, (2007) confirm some potential ethical issues that should be borne in mind when carrying out and conducting any piece of social and education research, chief among them:

1. Ensuring participants' right to privacy which involves: confidentiality and non-betrayal; anonymity and non-traceability; and right to withdrawal at any stage.

2. Getting participants' informed consent, usually in writing.

3. Avoiding deception of participants e.g. withholding information about the true nature of the research being conducted.

4. Informing them about the scientific value of conducting the research or beneficences of the research to them.

5. Fully acknowledging all those who contribute to or help in the research and this acknowledgement should reflect the contribution of all participants at any stage of the research.

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Finally and according to Durham University (2004), the research should be carried out within context which is full of academic freedom and balanced obligations between the funding bodies and the researcher(s) e.g. the researcher(s) has the right to disseminate the findings, in conducting, analyzing and reporting of research; the researcher(s) should avoid any undue or questionable influence made by funding bodies or governments; the researcher(s) should get the institute's permission to be engaged in any research contract; the institute should not compel any researcher to take part in any research contract; and the aims and sponsorship of research should always be made explicit by researcher(s).

> *The sponsor has a right to expect high quality, rigorous and usable research (…)*
> *The researcher has obligations to the sponsor, but not to doctor or compromise*
> *the research (Cohen, Manion & Morrison, 2007: 74-75).*

The critical question to be asked here is: how does the researcher consider these ethics in his present research? The researcher makes every attempt to take into account all relevant ethics to reduce hazards to the participants and raise the quality of his research as follows:

1. First of all, he has read and discussed with his supervisors the code of practice on education research ethics as indicated and clarified by the Education Department at Durham University, in which his research is being conducted. Then he is fully acquainted with how to be ethical in carrying out his research from the very beginning to reporting and publishing his findings.

2. He filled in the 'Research Ethics and Data Protection Monitoring Form' provided by his department and submitted it to the 'Department's Research Ethics and Data Protection Sub-Committee' with a copy of the research proposal which details methods and reporting strategies. In addition, he attached a copy of the consent form translated into Arabic language, the language of the interviewees. The Sub-Committee assessed the research against the British Educational Research Association's Revised Ethical Guidelines for Educational Research

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(2004), and approved the research and issued a certification that the research meets acceptable ethical standards.

3. He filled in an application form, which details all procedures and methods to conduct the fieldwork and collect the required data sustained by a copy of the research methods, the questionnaire and the semi-structured interview guide. He submitted it to all relevant stakeholders to gain access and get their consent to do the fieldwork and collect data. In return, he gained the consent from the Minister of Higher Education in Egypt, the sponsor, the Minister of Education, where the questionnaire will be distributed to the Arabic language teachers and supervisors at secondary school in the chosen education district (Ismailia), and got consent from the education district itself. In addition, he got consent from security authorities and 'Central Agency for Public Mobilization and statistics', which holds all statistics data about all education sectors and districts, in Egypt to do the fieldwork and to gather any relevant data.

4. The researcher will hand his thesis and findings out to all relevant stakeholders after he has finished.

5. The researcher got a consent form signed by all the interviewees before conducting interviews and clarified that they have the right to withdrawal or cancel or change what they agreed upon at any time or stage (See appendix B, the interview's consent form).

6. Before embarking on interviewing, the researcher contacted the interviewees in person and clarified the aims of his research and how their contribution is important to the research and then he arranged and agreed with them upon what preferred times and places to interview them. In addition, the researcher acknowledged them all for their cooperation and contribution in advance and after interviewing to make an empathetic atmosphere between the researcher and

his interviewees which help them to talk freely and give the maximum benefits from their experiences.

7. The researcher contacted secondary schools headmasters (within Isamilia district) and the principal of secondary schools supervisors in person to get permission and clarify when teachers and supervisors are available to be handed the questionnaire and then suitable times arranged to hand the questionnaire out and get responses back.

8. The researcher introduced the questionnaire by covering letter pointing out clearly the aim of his research, the time required to answer the questionnaire and instructions on how to answer it and stressing that taking part is totally voluntary and they have the right to withdrawal at any stage without giving any reasons. In addition, he thanked them in advance for their cooperation and contribution (See Appendix B, the questionnaire).

9. The researcher assured that all the data will be treated fully anonymously and will be used only to serve the purpose of his research. Therefore, writing names was not compulsory and the responses were treated anonymously by aggregating data and then they can not be traced or betrayed to any one.

10. Likewise, the researcher assured the interviewees that all recording would be treated fully confidentially and would be used only to serve the purpose of his research and may be revealed only to the supervisors or examiners to discuss any arising issues and then would be destroyed.

11. The researcher did not ask any sensitive or stressful questions neither in the questionnaire nor in the interview. On the contrary, he put an open-ended question at the end of each section on the questionnaire and put a general open-ended question at the end of the interview to give all participants the opportunity

to express their any relevant beliefs, thoughts, and opinions in a respectful way of their dignities.

12. The researcher explained benefits that may teachers and supervisors (the questionnaire respondents) gain through conducting the present research as it may provide them with new trends in reading theory and practice in terms of reading targets, content, instruction, and assessment that help them in their teaching of and supervision of reading at secondary schools respectively. Likewise, he clarified benefits to the specialists in curriculum and instruction as the results may provide them with a framework for planning and designing the curriculum of reading as many of them are involved in such processes.

13. Moreover, there is a mutual consent and agreement between the researcher and his institute (The Faculty of Education at Suez Canal University in Egypt) to be engaged in competitive research contract (scholarship) with the Minister of Higher Education (the sponsor) and doing PhD by research under the area of 'curriculum planning and design'. The sponsor gives the researcher full academic freedom to undertake his project, under the above broad heading, including the right to publish, considering all procedures and methods that secure the quality of this project and without putting or mentioning any undue or questionable influence on the researcher at any stage as it is unacceptable to compromise the research to meet the sponsor's objectives. Therefore, the researcher has the right to decide upon his research purposes, methodology, design, methods and findings.

14. Furthermore, the researcher avoided deception of the participants and told them the truth about what exactly the purpose of his research, the data to be gathered and how they would be used.

15. He assured all participants, respondents to the questionnaire and the interviewees that there are no maleficent effects of their participation.

16. Above all and as it is supposed to be, the researcher makes every attempt and does his best to follow the right and relevant procedures and methods and to reduce or avoid any intentional unethical action e.g. bias, plagiarism, or fabrication.

5.3 The Fieldwork

Under this heading, there are three critical issues to be clarified: population description and choice of participants, administering the questionnaire and conducting the semi-structured interview, and setting forth the data analysis techniques.

5.3.1 The population description and choice of sample

As far as the terms of 'population' and 'sample' are concerned, it is important to clarify what we mean by these terms before embarking on describing the population and choosing the sample. Broadly speaking, the term 'population' refers to "the universe of units from which a sample is to be selected" (Bryman, 2004: 542). It should be borne in mind that the term 'population' does not refer only to people because it might refer to people, measures, books, or any sets of units which a sample is to be chosen. The term 'sample' refers to "the segment of the population that is selected for research. It is a subset of the population" (pp. 542-443).

In this context, the researcher needs to clarify two critical issues which are: describing the parameters of his targeted population and choosing a sample which is representative and accessible. With respect to the first issue, ideally, the targeted population of the questionnaire in the current research is all the Arabic language teachers and supervisors at secondary schools in Egypt, and the targeted population of the semi-structured interview is all professionals and specialists in the area of curriculum and instruction (Arabic language). However, in practice, it is impossible, in terms of cost and time, for the researcher to apply his instruments to this population therefore, he needs to select a sample as a subset or a segment of this population. There are some critical points that should be considered when sampling these are:

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1. The sample size;
2. Representativeness and parameters of the sample;
3. Access to the sample;
4. The sampling strategy to be used (Cohen, Manion & Morrison, 2007: 100).

First and foremost, the researcher should make sure of the accessibility of his sample, since otherwise, there is no point to discussing sampling if the sample can not be accessed. In the present research, the researcher gained written access to his sample as discussed above in the ethics section. Regarding the sample size, there is no definitive or clear-cut answer and therefore, it is not straightforward to make a decision about the right sample size. However, there is a number of considerations that should be taken into account when deciding on the required sample size e.g. the purpose of the research being conducted, the nature of the population under scrutiny, cost and time available, non-response or low-response rate, number of the researchers conducting the research, and the kind of analysis being undertaken (Bryman, 2004; Cohen, Manion & Morrison, 2007).

Consequently and with taking into account all the foregoing considerations, the sample size in the present research involves all Arabic language teachers (262) and supervisors (35) at secondary schools in one education district (Ismailia district) out of twenty nine districts in Egypt. This district is, to some degree, a representative one as it has the same or similar segment of population in all Egyptian districts e.g. Suez district; Port Said district; Almenya district, or Cairo district. If we agree upon the sample size, the issue to be raised here is: to what extent this sample represents the wider population? Firstly, it should be a "representative sample that reflects the population accurately, so that it is a microcosm of the population" (Bryman, 2004: 543). Of course, there is a difference between the Egyptian education districts in terms of the number of population in each one however, all of them hold similar populations in terms of gender, qualification, place of teaching (rural areas, suburb areas, or inner-city), the curriculum they teach, age, position, and experience. This district represents the population and as a result of this representativeness of the sample district (Ismailia), the findings of this questionnaire

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can be generalized to the wide population in other education districts in Egypt or at least can be generalized to Ismailia district.

Furthermore, the sample size of the semi-structured interview depends on the availability of relevant people to be interviewed and the 'saturation principle' adapted from grounded theory (Bryman, 2004) i.e. the researcher intended to interview some key figures who are concerned with curriculum and instruction (Arabic language) in Egypt, and he intended to continue interviewing until he could not find salient additions to the data gathered.

The question now is: how and why does the researcher choose his sample? Broadly speaking, there are two main methods for selecting a sample from sampling frame i.e. "the listing of all units in the population from which a sample is selected" (Bryman, 2004: 543): probability sample (random) and non-probability sample (purposive) i.e. probability sample involves, for example, simple random sample, and stratified sample whereas, non-probability sample includes, for instance, convenience sample, and snowball sample (Cohen, Manion & Morrison, 2000; De Vaus, 2002; Bryman, 2004).

The snowball sampling method suits the semi-structured interview adapted in the present research and the reason behind that is: the researcher needs to get some key figures' views in the field about the proposed RLCD for secondary students in Egypt. It is more appropriate to choose figures who are more relevant, available, and reliable. Also, it enables the researcher to approach intentionally some interviewee(s) to be met at first and then he counts on the present interviewee to identify who will be interviewed next. This results in interviewing the most relevant and reliable figures in the field. This point is explained by Bryman (2004) as she points out that

such sampling [purposive sampling] is essentially strategic and entails an attempt to establish a good correspondence between research questions and sampling. In other words, the researcher samples on the basis of wanting to interview people who are relevant to the research questions (pp. 332-333).

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In addition, the convenience sampling method is more appropriate for the questionnaire adapted in the present research and the reason behind that is: it is feasible for the researcher in terms of cost, time, and administrative support to select one education district (Ismailia district) and hand out the questionnaire to all Arabic language teachers and supervisors at secondary school in this district and then get back the replies by hand. This is inferred from Bryman (2004) when she broadly explains that

> *social research is (...) frequently based on convenience sampling. Probability sampling (...) is frequently avoided because of the difficulty and costs involved (p.100).*

However, this sample, as indicated above, is a representative sample.

5.3.2 Distributing the questionnaire and interviewing

After the choice of the sample, Ismailia education district, the researcher gained access (in a written form) from all relevant stakeholders as indicated above. He got a list of all secondary schools and their addresses and went to these schools and gained access (in an oral form) from the schools headmasters after explaining his research aims and its benefits to these schools. The headmasters acquainted the researcher with the times that teachers would be available at. Hence, the researcher handed out the questionnaire to all Arabic language teachers (262) at secondary school in this district and he agreed with the participants upon times to get the responses back and he left his contact details available to any participant. The main problem associated with administering the questionnaire was that the schools were dispersed all over the district and it was very difficult in terms of time, cost, and distance to hand out the questionnaire and get back the replies. Afterwards, the researcher went to the supervisors' headquarter and gained access (in an oral form) from the head of supervisors who acquainted the researcher with the time that the supervisors were available to be handed out the questionnaire. Hence, the researcher handed out the questionnaire to all supervisors at secondary schools in the chosen district and agreed with them upon the time to get the responses back and he left

his contact details available to any participant. It was easy in terms of time and cost for the researcher to distribute and get back the replies as the supervisors gather every week in the supervisors' headquarter to discuss relevant issues that may arise during the course of supervision.

Likewise, the researcher went to two key professional (Professor Younis and Professor El-Morsy, See Appendix C, Table 6.2), in the field of curriculum and instruction and explained his research purposes and the significance of their contribution to the present research. The researcher asked them to acquaint him with a list of most relevant figures in the field that the researcher can interview. Then, he contacted them and explained his research purposes and the significance of their contribution to the present research and agreed with them upon times and places suitable for interviewing. Above all, they were asked to sign a consent form to ensure anonymity and no harmful consequences. The researcher continued interviewing until he found no new data have been added so, the total interviewees were nine. The first impression taken on the gathered data that support the data provided by the questionnaire.

5.3.3 The data analysis techniques

The main issues to be addressed here are: preparing data for analyzing through 'coding' numbering or indexing and, specifying which statistical packages (software) and techniques will be employed in analyzing data especially. The current instruments provide two different, however, complementary types of data i.e. quantitative data provided by the questionnaire and qualitative data provided by the semi-structured interview. As far as data analysis techniques are concerned, it is important to clarify some relevant concepts to this context while preparing data to be analyzed these are: data coding, scales of data, parametric and non-parametric data, descriptive and inferential statistics, and statistical techniques and software packages.

Broadly speaking, coding is a key process in education research whereby the researcher assigns numbers to certain categories or break down data into categories and gives label or name to each of them. The aim behind that is to facilitate organizing, processing or

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analyzing a certain set of gathered data (Bryman, 2004:146). Coding in qualitative data, as the case of the semi-structured interview adapted in the present research, occurs after collecting data (post-coding) by breaking down gathered data into categories and giving names or labels to each of them in a flexible way. However, the researcher may group generated ideas and insights into themes (indexing) that emerge from collected data without coding them. On the contrary, coding or 'numbering' in quantitative data occurs before (pre-coding) collecting data by assigning a number to each category in a fixed way and the numbers just act as tags to facilitate processing data by the computer as in the case of the questionnaire adapted in the present research (Oishi, 2003:177; Bryman, 2004:146). Moreover, the researcher takes into account the following basic principles when coding:

1. The generated categories must be distinct and can not overlapp.

2. The list of categories must be complete and cover all possibilities and therefore, it is preferable to add 'other' as an extra category.

3. The researchers should use and consult the 'coding frame' which involves the lists of codes and their rules for application when coding unstructured data (Bryman & Cramer, 2004).

When coding data and preparing them to be analyzed, the researcher should be aware of the scales or levels of data he codes and uses because, considering which statistical techniques or tests depends on the kind of data being analyzed e.g. it is incorrect to apply means (the average score) to nominal data. There are four levels of data in terms of scaling and measuring; the nominal which denotes classifying data; the ordinal involves classifying and ordering data; the interval which includes classifying, ordering and metric data without true zero; and the ratio denotes classifying, ordering and metric data with true zero (Cohen, Manion & Morrison, 2007). In addition, the nominal and ordinal levels of data are classified as non-parametric data which can not make assumptions about the population and, the interval and the ratio levels are classified as parametric data whereby the researcher can make assumptions about the population in question. It follows from that

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it is incorrect to apply parametric statistics to non-parametric data, although it is possible to apply non-parametric statistics to parametric data (p. 503).

The last relevant issue here is referring to descriptive statistics that describe and report what has been found in the gathered data and make no inferences or predictions e.g. means and standard deviation. Whereas, inferential statistics make such inferences and predictions on the collected data e.g. correlations and regression (Cohen, Manion & Morrison, 2007). The present researcher uses nominal and ordinal scales of data and hence, the gathered data are non-parametric and therefore, the researcher decided to focus on descriptive statistical techniques mainly frequencies. The researcher uses the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) version (15.00) for windows to tackle and facilitate his analysis as the most widely used software for analyzing data in social and education research.

CHAPTER SIX: DATA ANALYSIS

6.0 Introduction

This chapter presents, discusses, and interprets the data provided by the present research instruments, the questionnaire which gathered and produced quantitative data from Arabic language teachers and supervisors at secondary school, and those respondents from the chosen Egyptian education district (Ismailia) as a sample. The researcher got (194) response out of (297) the total number of teachers and supervisors of Ismailia education district. This means that the researcher got a return of 65% percent of the total sample. On the other hand, this chapter is concerned with analyzing the other complementary perspective of data provided by the semi-structured interview which provides qualitative data derived from (9) professionals (university staff) in the field of curriculum and instruction (Arabic language) in Egypt. In this context, it is worth reminding the reader that this analysis is guided by the research questions and in the meantime, contributes to answer these questions. These questions are:

1. How might the curriculum of reading in secondary school in Egypt reflect new trends in reading theory and practice?

2. What might the proposed RLCD for secondary school students (15-17 year-old) in Egypt look like? The answer to this main question can be shaped through answering four sub-questions as follows

   - What should be taught (targets) in reading literacy curriculum for secondary school students in Egypt?
   - What types of texts (content) should be available through this curriculum?
   - How can reading literacy be taught (instruction) in secondary school in Egypt?
   - How can reading literacy be assessed (assessment)?

3. To what extent would the proposed reading literacy curriculum design be accepted in practice?

6.1 Aims of the data analysis

The present data analysis has the following aims:

1. First and foremost, shedding light on the demographic data/personal data for the questionnaire respondents and the interview subjects to give the reader a clear and complete picture about the background of the sample being participated and to show how much they are relevant and important source of information for the present research.

2. Finding out the perception of the respondents, Arabic language teachers and supervisors at secondary schools in Egypt, of the new trends in reading theory and practice regarding RLCD stated on the questionnaire.

3. Identifying the degree of importance of each item on the questionnaire as rated by the respondents on a five-point scale from very important to undecided.

4. Identifying new ideas and thoughts that may be raised by the respondents through answering the open-ended question at the end of each section on the questionnaire.

5. Exploring the professionals' views (the interview subjects) about issues in question i.e. RLCD in terms of its targets, content, instruction, assessment, or any other relevant issues.

6. Comparing and contrasting between data provided by the questionnaire and data provided by the interview and finding out similarities or contradictions between them.

7. Identifying the reading literacy targets that should be taught in RLCD as viewed by the respondents and the interviewees.

8. Identifying the types of texts that should be available through RLCD as viewed by the respondents and the interviewees.

9. Outlining general considerations for reading literacy instruction at secondary schools as viewed by the respondents and the interviewees.

10. Specifying considerations for assessment of reading literacy at secondary schools as viewed by the respondents and the interviewees.

11. Finding out any relevant and important information that may be raised by the interviewees as they answer the two questions at the end of the interview about any relevant information to the interview topics or any useful considerations for designing the curriculum of reading literacy. Also, getting any relevant information that may be raised by the respondents as they answer the open-ended questions on the questionnaire.

12. Finding out to what extent the participants agree with theory. In other words, is what is revealed by theoretical analysis is acceptable and sustainable by people involved and interested in RLCD?

6.2 Data analysis techniques

Before embarking into analysis, it is very important to clarify the techniques adapted and the procedures followed in this analysis to make the analysis clear for the researcher and the reader as well. In this vein, the researcher adapts and follows mixed quantitative and qualitative techniques that would suit data provided by the questionnaire and the semi-structured interview, which allows him to analyze qualitative and quantitative data as two complementary perspectives. First and foremost, it is worth clarifying that the researcher has used and done the analysis in Arabic language, the mother tongue of the interviewees and the respondents, especially for the interviews and then reported the meanings of what people say in English. The reason is that the researcher intends to

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stick to and remain rooted in the original data and meanings as will be indicated later in this section.

It is a common understanding that the quantitative analysis is relatively quicker and straightforward more than qualitative one and therefore, the researcher intends to clarify qualitative analysis before setting forth the procedures followed in his analysis. In this vein, it is worth taken into account when analyzing qualitative data provided by the semi-structured interview the importance of remaining rooted and grounded in the original data, and of keeping data accessible in an organised way to be captured and revisited, which allows transparency to others and facilitates analysis process. However, the analyst should be flexible and add and amend as the analysis process is progressing (Spencer, Ritchie & O'Conner, 2003: 210-211).

In addition, there are many strategies to analyze qualitative data e.g. grounded theory, analytic induction, narrative analysis or cross-sectional analysis. Furthermore, there are two ways of handling data either manually or computer-assisted as known by Computer-Assisted Qualitative Data Analysis (CAQDAS) e.g. NVivo software (Mason, 2002; Spencer, Ritchie & O'Conner, 2003). The reason behind adapting a manual strategy is that the researcher has conducted nine interviews each of which is about 25 minutes and he can handle this amount of data manually and there is no need for CAQDAS software as it is in this case a time-consuming. In addition, the researcher counts on the cross-sectional or code and retrieve analysis strategy as it provides a systematic framework of categorizing, indexing and organising data, manually or with computer. This makes data accessible, manageable in terms of retrieval, revisiting, stocking, searching themes or concepts, and enables comparisons or connections (Mason, 2002; Spencer, Ritchie & O'Conner, 2003).

Consequently and counting on the foregoing brief discussion of qualitative analysis and considering the mixed techniques, the researcher adapts the following procedures in his analysis:

1. Coding the data provided by the closed questions on the questionnaire by giving each category a number which serves only as a tag and has not any numerical value; all data here are nominal or ordinal and then descriptive and non-parametric statistical techniques were used.

2. Entering coded data into computer using the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) version (15.00) for windows as the most widely used software for analyzing data in education research.

3. Using the appropriate and relevant statistical techniques which achieve the aims behind employing the questionnaire and then answering the research question; these are frequencies and percentages.

4. Finding out and looking at themes presented in the answers of open-ended question at the end of each section and compare and contrast these themes with the answers of closed questions.

5. Reading the whole data set of 'the interviews scripts' carefully.

6. Creating themes/categories that were emerging from the whole data set and generating an initial list of categories/themes and at this stage the researcher stuck to the interviewees' own language (Arabic language) and understandings.

7. Applying these themes/categories to the whole data set and assigning data to these themes, and the aim behind that is to reduce the volume of data and make them manageable and organised.

8. Refining themes and distilling categories and re-classifying them in a descriptive and an interpretative way according to the key elements and dimensions found considering the research questions and the researcher's own understanding and language.

9. Assigning data to refined and distilled themes and building explanations and making reflections on forms, linkages, patterns or contradictions being found and presented.

10. Looking for any new ideas and thoughts that may emerge from answers to the two open-ended questions at the end of the interviews that are relevant and important to the issues in question.

11. Combining analysis of data provided by the interviews with the data provided by the questionnaire to compare and contrast between the practitioners' (teachers and supervisors) perceptions and the professionals' views.

12. Comparing the views of participants with the theoretical accounts from the literature.

6.3 Presenting data

It is worth reminding the reader that data presentation will be shaped by three main questions: how far do they, the respondents and the interviewees, agree with what stated by the researcher, on the basis of his reading of the research literature and its adaptation to the Egyptian situation, about the reading literacy targets, content, instruction, and assessment? What do they say new but relevant to the topics in question? And how can all of this be related to the theoretical analysis derived from the research literature and the Egyptian reality? The following steps are followed in presenting data:

1. Presenting each section independently i.e. reading targets, content, instruction, and assessment respectively.

2. In each section, the researcher intends, in the first instance, to find out how far respondents agree with what is stated about the issues in question and what do they add new and relevant to the topics in question.

3. In each section, the researcher discusses, interprets, and relates data provided by the literature analysis and its adaptation to the Egyptian reality.

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│   Fieldwork data:     │              │  Theoretical analysis:│
│ the questionnaire and │◄───────────►│ RLCD: targets, content,│
│ the semi-structured   │              │ instruction, and      │
│     interview         │              │    assessment         │
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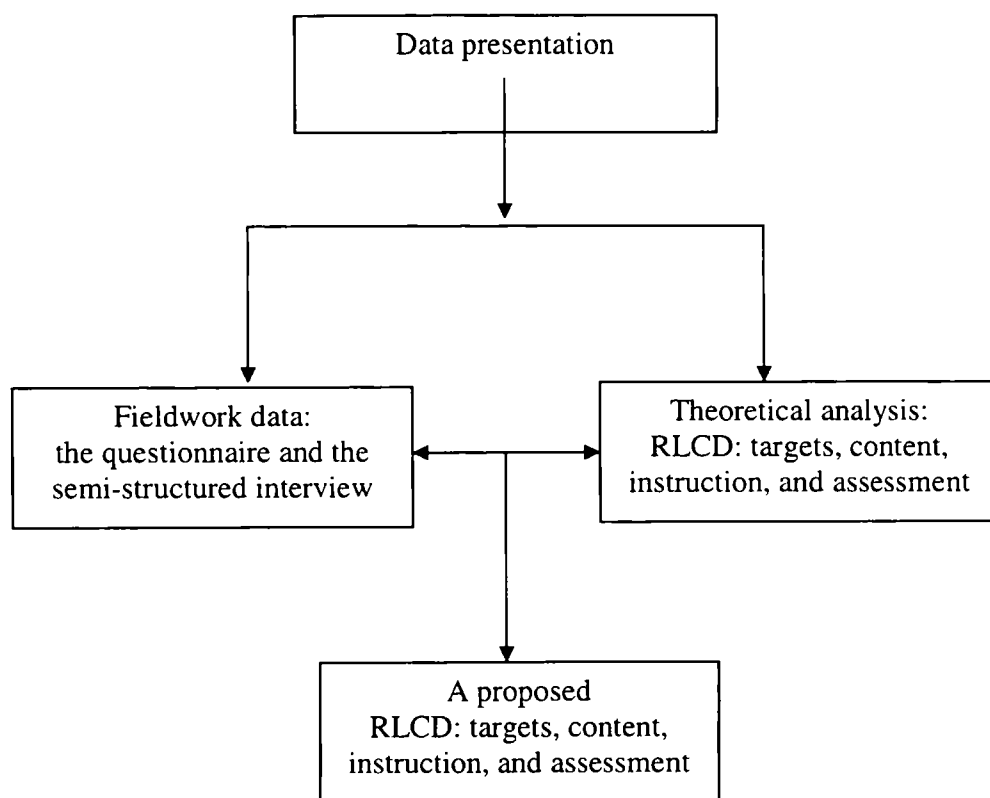
Figure 6.1: Main steps in presenting data analysis.

6.4 Analyzing the data

Considering the research questions and analyzing aims and techniques stated above, the analysis involves six main sections as follows:

6.4.1 Reporting demographic data

The teachers and supervisors (the practitioners)

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The researcher intends to give some information about the respondents of the questionnaire to enable the reader to have a clear and complete picture about them. The researcher got a return of 194 (65%) response out of 297 the total number of teachers and supervisors at secondary schools from the chosen education district (Ismailia). A return of 65% response is acceptable rate as one of the questionnaire limitations is low response rate, and the rate of 60% to 70% is acceptable rate as indicated by Mangione (1995) (quoted in Bryman, 2004: 135).

Table 6.1 (Appendix C) shows that the respondents according to their gender were divided into 126 (69.6%) male and 55 (30.4%) female from the valid cases (181). There are 13 (6.7) missing cases from the total number (194). Actually, these percentages are consistent with the Egyptian reality as most teachers and supervisors at secondary schools are male because females do not want to teach or supervise those students as they are, most of the time, naughty and troublemakers. Also, there are 13 missing cases maybe because many respondents do not want or forget to tick their gender. With respect to age, the vast majority of the respondents were either between 30 to 40 year old (38.1%) or 40 to 50 (43.3%). This means that those respondents take some time working at the elementary schools, according to promotion system in Egypt, before being promoted to secondary level, and this gives them some experience and good background about teaching and learning in general and reading in particular.

Looking at the experience variable, the table indicates that the vast majority of the respondents have different ranges of experiences distributed between 10 to 15 year (23.7%), 15-20 year (29.5%), and 20 to 25 (24.2%). This shows that most of them have long experience in teaching, which makes them a valuable source of information for the present research. Moreover, the table shows that 97.9 % of respondents have a university education. In Egypt, you need to have at least a four years university degree to be able to teach and most of them have been taught at faculties of education in Egypt, and once again this makes them a valuable source for the present research. Furthermore, the table shows that the vast majority of the respondents were teachers (80%) whereas 17.4% were supervisors. Because each supervisor supervises a number of teachers hence, the

number of teachers should be greater than the number of supervisors. This gives the researcher the opportunity to get different views from different perspectives of practice either teaching or supervision.

Finally, most respondents were working inside the city (73.7%) whereas, 18.9% were working in sub-urban areas, and the rest (7.4%) were working in rural areas. This comes in congruence with the Egyptian reality as most of secondary schools are situated inside the cities. Broadly speaking, the number of the Egyptian secondary schools in cities is double their number in rural areas (Ministry of Education, http://services.moe.gov.eg, June 19th, 2008). To sum up, the demographic data about the respondents of the questionnaire show that they have long experience either in teaching or in supervision, they are majority male, working in a variety of places, and having at least four years university degree in education. All these factors make them valuable source of information and relevant to the present research.

The interview subjects

It is not the intention of the semi-structured interview adapted to gather demographic data but the researcher intends to explain the interviewees' position, experience, and universities where they are working since this information shows how much those interviewees are relevant and valuable source of information to the topics in question.

Table 6.2 (Appendix C) shows that all of the interview subjects are specialized and interested in curriculum and instruction (Arabic language), and all of them are PhD holders in the same field. Also, it indicates that many of them have more than 30 year experience in teaching of Arabic language, and all of them work at faculties of education at their universities in Egypt. The main task they do is teaching and training students who are willing to be teachers of Arabic language. In addition, many of them are involved in training in-service teachers. They are from different universities and backgrounds. One of them, Prof. Younis, is the head of the Egyptian Reading and Literacy Association which is mainly concerned with reading literacy research. Above all, it is ethical matter to mention their names as a sort of thankfulness of them for their

cooperation and participation in the present research. To conclude, all this information reflects how those informants are so important and relevant to be interviewed and the data they provide are so valuable since they are experienced and experts in the topic in question either in teaching and learning of reading or in planning and designing of curriculum.

6.4.2. Reading literacy targets (RLT)

It is worth reminding the reader that this section contributes to answer the research sub-question of 'what should be taught (targets) in reading literacy curriculum for secondary school students in Egypt?' The researcher combines and analyzes all the available data together i.e. data provided by either closed or open questions on the questionnaire and data provided by the interviewees in the semi-structured interview. The table below indicates rated reading targets by the respondents according to the degree of importance counting on aggregation of positive responses (very important or important) and all other responses (less important, not important, or undecided) since all responses tend to be positive as it will be indicated through analysis.

Table 6.3: Reading Purposes and targets ranked by importance

(N = 194)

No.	Item Description	Positive responses		Other responses	
		Frequency	Percent	Frequency	Percent
1	Use the context clues to understand a text.	191	98.5	3	1.5
2	Retrieve information and ideas from a text.	188	97.9	4	2.1
3	Draw inferences and extract meaning beyond the literal.	188	97.9	4	2.1
4	Distinguish characteristic features of different types of texts.	189	97.4	5	2.6
5	Interpret the author's an intended meaning.	188	97.4	5	2.6
6	Appreciate the value of literary texts being read.	188	96.9	6	3.1
7	Display fluency (speed, accuracy, and prosody) in reading of different types of texts.	185	95.4	9	4.6
8	Benefit from reading in language use in everyday life.	184	94.8	10	5.2
9	Use strategies to resolve blockages to meaning e.g. rereading a certain piece of text or consulting other references.	180	94.7	10	5.3
10	Elaborate the understanding of texts in light of the previous knowledge (schemata)	180	94.2	11	5.8
11	Use strategies to monitor one's own understanding of a text e.g. clarifying and referencing to one's purposes from reading.	180	94.2	11	5.8

Continuation of table 6.3. Reading targets in terms of the degree of their

importance

(N = 194)

No.	Item Description	Positive responses		Other responses	
		Frequency	Percent	Frequency	Percent
12	Analyze critically information in a text e.g. sifting relevant from irrelevant information in a text.	181	93.8	12	6.2
13	Read strategically i.e. fitting reading strategies to purposes for reading e.g. seeking information, literary experience, or performing a task.	179	92.3	15	7.7
14	Display positive interests in free and independent reading.	177	91.7	16	8.3
15	Display positive attitudes to reading	172	88.7	22	11.3
16	Recognise literary texts from different cultures and traditions	161	83.4	32	16.6
17	Anticipate meaning e.g. making predictions before and while reading about the further development of a text	149	77.6	43	22.4

Table 6.3 (Items 1, 2, 3, 4, 5) indicates that these five items got over 97% positive response as rated by the questionnaire respondents in terms of the degree of their importance (very important and important) to be included as targets in RLCD for

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secondary school students in Egypt. Looking at those targets implies that all of them fall in the top twelve items out of sixty three which got positive response on the questionnaire, and also can be classified under one broad category which is reading understanding literally or inferentially. Since item (4) to distinguish characteristics features of different types of texts and item (2) to retrieve information and ideas from a text can be seen as a literal understanding. Whereas, item (1) to use the context clues to understand a text, item (3) to draw inferences and extract meanings beyond the literal, and item (5) to interpret the author's intended meaning can be categorized as an inferential understanding. This reveals explicitly, as rated by the respondents, the importance of teaching reading understanding literally or inferentially as a critical broad target to be included in RLCD for secondary schools in Egypt. In addition, the respondents give this broad target a priority over the rest of reading literacy targets stated on the questionnaire.

Probing the interviewees' answers shows that teaching text structure (Table 6.4., Item 4) is stressed by them as a key for reading literacy understanding. In this vein, Abu Bakr considers teaching text structure as a key target for reading understanding since it helps students to get a mental picture of the text structure or skeleton followed by the authors. This enables them to make connections and understand relationships between and among ideas stated in a text. He states that

> *teaching text structure can be classified under reading understanding since by knowing the structure followed by the author helps students to understand ideas in a text. Also, each type of text has its own structure such as a story, a poem, or an essay and teaching such these structures is an important key for reading understanding (Script 3, Appendix C).*

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Table 6.4: Summary of themes found in answering questions about what should be taught (targets) in RLCD

N = 9

No.	Themes	Interviewees								
		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
1	Deep understanding	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x
2	Meta-reading strategies	x	x	x		x				x
3	Strategic reading				x	x	x	x	x	x
4	Text structure	x		x		x				x
5	Fluency (speed, accuracy, prosody)	x	x	x	x		x	x	x	x
6	Independent reading		x					x		
7	Positive attitudes and interests in reading	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x
8	Reading in content areas	x	x					x		

In addition, Younis relates teaching text structure to creativity as he says

> *it is important for students to know characteristic features that make every type of text distinctive in a sense of how to distinguish between expository or narrative structures followed by the authors or how to discriminate between different types of narrative writings e.g. stories, playwrights, and poems since students' creative abilities grow and develop quickly at secondary school and students need to know these structures to develop their creative abilities (Script 1, Appendix C).*

Eventually, to distinguish characteristic features of different types of texts (Item 4, Table 6.3) is supported by the interviewees as an important sub-understanding target to be considered in RLCD for secondary school students. To sum up this point, it is very critical for secondary students to be taught both literal and inferential understanding, and this broad reading target is highly prioritized by the respondents on the questionnaire. Also, teaching text structure is supported by the interviewees as well.

In the same broad vein, reading understanding, table 6.3 (Item 6) shows that this target got more than 96% positive response and fell in the top twenty items on the questionnaire. This reveals that to appreciate the value of literary texts being read is a very important target as seen by the respondents to be involved in RLCD for students in question. Furthermore, looking at Items (8, 10) reveals that these items got over 94% positive response: item (10) to elaborate an understanding of a text in light of one's previous knowledge (schemata), and item (8) to benefit from reading in language use in everyday life. Those two targets fall in the top thirty items which got positive response on the questionnaire. In addition, item (12) to analyze critically information in a text e.g. sifting relevant from irrelevant information in a text, got 93.8% positive response and fell in the low thirty items on the questionnaire. Although, reading critically (Item, 12) got the lowest percent in comparison to the rest of sub-understanding targets on the questionnaire, it is still an important one since it got more than 93% which is considered as a high percent. There are three crucial reading targets which need to be taught to secondary students in Egypt as rated by the respondents on the questionnaire:

1. Appreciative reading (Item, 6), where students criticise, judge, and appreciate the value of literary text.

2. Interactive reading (Item, 8, 10), where students not only receive, criticise, information but also, interact with teachers, texts they read, or classmates, relate acquired information to their pervious knowledge, on the one hand, and to their language use in everyday life on the other hand.

3. Critical reading (Item, 12), where students can analyze critically information stated in a text.

It can be argued that the above reading literacy targets can be classified under one heading that is: reflective reading. The meaning of 'interactive reading' is stressed by the interviewees, as Te'ama states that

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reading involves four levels: recognition; understanding; criticism/judging; and interaction and the latter means that students' ability to benefit from or apply acquired information in their lives (Script 2, Appendix C).

This comes completely in consistence with benefiting from reading in language use in everyday life (Item 8, Table 6.3.), it also supports the concept of reading literacy advocated in the present research (See chapter two, what is reading literacy?)

All nine items (1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 8, 10, 12, Table 6.3.) discussed above can be broadly categorized under one heading that is: 'reading for meaning': literally, inferentially, or reflectively. It can be noticed that although the respondents give high positive response to all these items which is higher than 93%, they prioritize reading literally and inferentially a little bit over reading reflectively. Unlike the respondents, the interviewees prioritize reflective understanding over literal or inferential understanding. In other words, they stress the importance of being critical, appreciative or creative in reading as table 6.4. (Item 1) reveals. In this vein, Te'ama states that

with respect to an understanding of a text, there are three levels of such understanding: reading lines; reading between lines; and reading beyond lines. Reading lines by which students get explicit information stated in a text; reading between lines whereby students make inferences beyond literal meaning; and reading beyond lines by which students can use acquired information in their life. However, I strongly support reading beyond lines since I am advocate of deep reading that I hope to teach our secondary students (Script 2, Appendix C).

Te'ama explains different levels of understanding and advocates the deepest one in which students grasp not only explicit or implicit information stated in a text but also, find ways to benefit from and apply acquired information in different forms of language use in everyday life. This highlights the importance of item (8) to benefit from reading in language use in every day life as depicted in table 6.3. Moreover, Awad broadens the horizons of reading understanding to cover seven levels as she states that

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in light of new trends in teaching and learning of reading, reading understanding involves seven levels as follows: literal; interpretive; deductive; inductive; critical; appreciative; and creative understanding. These seven levels should be taught for secondary students (Script 6, Appendix C).

Unlike Te'ama, Awad explains that all understanding levels are important targets to be included and all levels should be taken into account when teaching reading at secondary school. What Awad states, covers all items concerned with understanding on the questionnaire. In the same vein, Younis supports Awad when he says:

it is very important to develop the ways by which students can release irrelevant information in a text, recognise the logic behind evidences being presented in a text, or find something which has not been intended by the author. Since this helps in developing creative readers (Script 1, Appendix C).

It can be inferred from Younis's quote that he considers 'creative readers' as the most passionate target behind the teaching of reading at secondary school. In the same direction, Abu Bakr highlights not only the importance of being a 'creative reader' but also, gives it priority to be the most valuable target behind the teaching reading at secondary school as he states that

reading is not only to criticise texts being read or judge or appreciate these texts but also, to create since reading is not a passive action or receiving information stated by the authors. Reading can be productive e.g. students can be given a story and asked to make different ends for it (...) Reading targets should include developing students' ability to predict, criticise, analyze, appreciate, judge, evaluate texts being read, and above all to create" (Script 3, Appendix C).

It can be inferred that what is revealed by Abu Bakr supports strongly items 6, 8, 10, and 12 (Tables 6.3) on the questionnaire. More broadly, El-Morsy adds that

the most important target for the curriculum of reading at secondary stage or any stage is developing 'thinking readers' since students nowadays have to choose from alternatives which makes teaching thinking skills a compulsory target (...) Therefore, I urge to call reading session thinking session through reading (Script 8, Appendix C).

It seems from El-Morsy's quote that he calls for developing deep understanding/ which enables students to think critically and choose from alternatives. This comes in agreement with item 12 (Table 6.3) which focuses on the ability to analyze critically information in a text e.g. sifting relevant from irrelevant information in a text. Above all, developing deep understanding/ is stressed by five interviewees as the most important target that should be taught in RLCD for secondary students in Egypt as table 6.5. (Item 1) reflects.

Table 6.5: Summary of themes found in answering questions about what the most important targets to be taught in RLCD
N = 9

No.	Themes	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
1	Deep understanding		x	x		x			x	x
2	Fluency (i.e. speed, accuracy, expression)				x					

To conclude, the foregoing discussion regarding the teaching of reading understanding at secondary schools, the respondents to the questionnaire stress the importance of teaching understanding as a whole but they give relatively higher priority to literal and inferential understanding over reflective reading as percentages in table 6.3. indicate. In addition, the interviewees support what is revealed in the questionnaire regarding reading understanding targets as a whole. But, unlike the respondents, the interviewees prioritize deep understanding or reflective reading over literal or inferential levels as depicted in table 6.11 and table 6.12 (Item 1, Appendix C). This comes in support of

what is revealed by the theoretical analysis which explains that reading for meaning: literally, inferentially, or reflectively is the essence of teaching reading literacy for secondary school students. (See chapter three, reading literacy targets)

As far as reading targets are concerned, table 6.3 (Item, 7) shows that to display fluency (i.e. speed, accuracy, and prosody) in reading of different types of texts is important. This target got more than 95% positive response and fell in the top twenty items on the questionnaire. This reflects the importance of three perspectives by which fluency can be achieved in both silent and oral reading: speed reading and how students can increase their 'reading rate/pace' and how to adjust this speed to fit their purpose(s); accuracy in reading; and how students read orally and correctly in an expressive way.

Looking in depth at what is stated by the interviewees reveals that eight out of nine support involving teaching reading fluency i.e. speed, accuracy, and expression in what should be taught in RLCD for secondary students as depicted in table 6.4 (Item 5). This reflects to what extent teaching reading fluency is critical for secondary school students in Egypt. In this direction, Younis states that

> teaching speed reading is a very important skill since the press provides thousands of books and other readable materials. Thus, there is a bad need to teach different techniques for speed reading e.g. how to scan or skim to get accurate gist or main ideas in a text or how students report a summary of what they read accurately since speed with understanding compounds a very critical skill that is 'speed, accurate, and deep reading'. Our students need to be taught how to improve their speed reading as research done in this area showed that the Egyptian students are falling in the category of the slowest students around the world in terms of their reading rate (Script 1, Appendix C).

In addition, Younis justifies the importance of teaching speed reading and increasing students reading rate as a crucial perspective of reading fluency for the Egyptian secondary students whom he considers among the slowest students in the world in terms

of their 'reading rate'. Thus, those students have a strong need to be taught how to speed up and increase their reading rate. He indicates that teaching should balance between speed reading and accuracy of understanding of texts being read speedily or quickly.

This latter point is also stressed by Abdelkadr when he indicates that

> *speed is very important but speed should be accompanied by understanding. In other words, reading speedily with an understanding of what is being read (Script 4, Appendix C).*

Prospective speed reading involves increasing rate with achieving accurate understanding of what is being read. A plausible explanation for this view is reading even speedily without accurate understanding is worthless since the overall aim and the essence of any reading is understanding texts being read (Lapp & Flood, 1978) Moreover, Younis clarifies another perspective of reading fluency which is an 'expressive reading' as he points out that

> *it is very important to consider expression as a very important skill since students, sooner or later, face an audience to read or speak to. Therefore, it is important to read expressively and according to the situation as in drama series, theatre or role playing (Script 1, Appendix C).*

It can be argued that the 'expressive reading' i.e. reading aloud with expression, is a sign of an accurate and deep understanding of whatever text being read. Expression, on the one hand, reflects that readers understand the context where they read and read fluently without any hesitations and in this way they convey the meaning through expressions e.g. raising the tone to stress a certain point or stressing on a sentence to make it interrogative rather than informative. On the other hand, expressions help listeners to listen actively and interact with what is being read by the classmate/reader.

The latter point made Abdelkadr not only highlights the importance of what is stated by Younis about expression in oral reading but also, gives it the highest priority as explained in table 6.5. (Item 2). He says:

the most important target that should be taught is expression in oral reading since improving that encourages the listener to listen and interact with the reader/speaker which in turn gives the reader self-satisfaction about his or her reading performance (Script 4, Appendix C).

A plausible explanation of giving reading orally in an expressive way this priority is reading orally with expression reveals both forms of silent reading and oral reading. Students may read silently and grasp deeply what they read but they may lack ability or confidence to read orally and expressively.

From another angle, Zanhom explains some factors that help in developing reading fluency as he says:

fluency is improving very rapidly at secondary school if reading materials are different and varied and if students have interest in reading. In addition, if students have automatic recognition skills.(...) This variation and desire in reading lead not only to speed but also to understanding as well and this speed with understanding make students more experienced and fluent readers. There are different speeds for reading e.g. skimming to get the gist of a text or scanning to get main ideas or reading for study and this depends on 'strategic readers' who know and identify their purposes from reading (...) Unfortunately, rapid reading is so limited in the Arab world since we teach students to read only to pass exams and hence, our students are not fluent as a result of poor experiences and attitudes to reading (Script 7, Appendix C).

It can be inferred from Zanhom's quote that reading fluency requires the following elements:

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1. First and foremost, students need to have interest in what they read.

2. Extensive reading or variation in reading materials and resources since students are used to and are familiar with different types of texts they read.

3. Having automatic recognition skills which are supposed to be developed at the primary stage.

4. Strategic readers who know how to adjust their strategies and speed to fit their reading purposes.

5. Students need to understand accurately what they read speedily.

Zanhom agrees with Younis that students in the Egyptian secondary school are not fluent readers and thus, it is very important to meet their interests, to vary reading resources and materials, and to acquaint them with strategic reading since all these factors help in developing fluency.

From a third perspective, Te'ama links fluent and independent reading as he states that

> *fluency means that students can read independently without any help and this is the most passionate target behind teaching reading. Fluency is concerned with developing students' ability for autonomous-learning/reading and dealing with texts without help as a Chinese proverb says 'if you give me a fish you feed me for a day but if you teach me fishing then you feed me for all my life (Script 2, Appendix C).*

However, there is a difference between independency and fluency in reading. In this vein, Zanhom reveals that

> *students should be able to read independently or at least achieve gradual independence from teachers. Students should recognise, choose, criticise, or judge reading materials. In other words, using reading as a tool for not only receiving, understanding and judging but also for living and communication (Script 7, Appendix C).*

Using reading literacy as a tool for living and lifelong learning is a key target for RLCD advocated in the present research.

Reading fluency is concerned with improving reading rate, accuracy, and expression whereas, reading independency is concerned with the whole reading literacy process: understanding, strategies, or interests. In other words, independent readers use reading as a mechanism for learning and living and in this sense, they can choose readable materials, set a purpose for their reading, fit suitable reading strategies to achieve that purpose, develop their interests and above all, benefit from reading in their life and all this happens working on their own without or with little help from teachers. Fluency, on the other hand, is involved by and a necessary component for independent reading. In the meantime, it can be seen as a sign of the independent reading. This draws attention to an important reading target i.e. developing independent reading, which revealed by the interviewees as table 6.4 (Item 5) shows. This point is mentioned in the questionnaire in a different way as table 6.3 (Items 14) reveals: to display positive interest in free and independent reading, which means students interestingly, freely, and independently can read.

To conclude, reading literacy fluency has been viewed by the interviewees and the respondents as a key target for RLCD for secondary school students in Egypt. This supports what is revealed by the theoretical analysis (See chapter three, reading literacy fluency).

Continuing with reading targets, table 6.3 (Items 9, 11) reveals that item (9) to use strategies to resolve blockages to meaning e.g. rereading a certain piece of text or consulting other references and item (11) to use strategies to monitor one's own understanding of a text e.g. clarifying and referencing to one's purposes of reading. These two items got more than 94% positive response and fell in the top thirty items on the questionnaire. However, table 6.3. (Item 17) shows that to anticipate meaning e.g. making predictions before and while reading about further development of a text, got the lowest positive response 77.6% in comparison to the rest of targets on the questionnaire

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and came at the end of the reading targets list as rated by the respondents but, it still has relatively high positive response, which is more than 75%, to be included in RLCD for students in question. These three items can be broadly categorized under one heading that is: meta-reading strategies which reflect students' awareness of their reading.

Probing of the interviewees' answers as table 6.4 (Item 2) indicates that five out of nine refer to the importance of involving the meta-reading strategies in RLCD for secondary school in Egypt. In this vein, Younis explains that "students should be taught how to plan for reading and what they need to do and how to evaluate what they get from reading (...) Therefore, acquainting students with meta-cognition techniques e.g. prediction, reviewing, summarizing, or evaluation, should be considered in the curriculum of reading" (Case 1, Appendix C). Also, Shehata stresses the same meaning as he indicates that

> *students should be taught to think about what they think/read i.e. before reading they should identify questions/goals that are to be answered/achieved through reading and know how, when, and where they read. While reading they should know how to modify their thinking and reading behaviour and after reading how they evaluate and judge their reading in the light of pre-defined objectives (Script 9, Appendix C).*

What is revealed by Younis and Shehata indicates that students need to be taught meta-reading strategies in a sense of being aware of their reading behaviour at any stage of reading action before, while or after reading. They need to plan their reading before starting which helps them to get directly to their purpose and makes reading a meaningful process for them. Also, they need to monitor their ongoing understanding while reading against pre-defined purposes and modify their strategies if required to achieve their goals and after reading they need to judge whether they achieved their purposes or not. The interviewees shed light on two points as follows:

1. They completely support meta-reading strategies covered on the questionnaire and explain that students should be 'meta-readers' before, while or after reading.

2. They extend meta-reading strategies to include after reading action which is not covered on the questionnaire.

Students need not only to be taught different strategies for monitoring their ongoing understanding or to employ different strategies to overcome any obstacles that may hamper their understanding but also, they need to anticipate or expect or speculate about what they are reading or going to read since this makes them get involved and think about what they read to confirm or amend what they anticipate or even violate it. Above all, they need to judge their reading against pre-defined targets. In a nutshell, they need to be aware of their reading behaviour at every stage. This comes in an agreement with what is revealed by the theoretical analysis regarding meta-reading literacy as discussed in chapter three (Meta-reading literacy section).

As far as 'strategic reading literacy' is concerned as a target, table 6.3 (Item 13) shows that it is important to read strategically i.e. fitting reading strategies to purposes for reading e.g. seeking information, literary experience, or performing a task. This item got 92.3% positive response and fell in the top thirty items on the questionnaire. This implies that to be a 'strategic reader' is seen as an important target to be included in RLCD for secondary students. A plausible explanation is that students have different reading purposes and thus, they need to fit their reading strategies to each purpose. They need to be taught different strategies for different purposes and how and when they adapt a certain strategy to achieve a certain purpose(s) (See chapter three, strategic reading literacy).

Consulting the interviewees' responses as table 6.4 (Item 3) shows that six interviewees stress the importance of being 'strategic readers' who know the purposes of their reading and accommodate their reading strategies to fit and achieve that purposes i.e. they know when and how they just skim a text to get the gist of it or when and how they need to read deeply and get detailed information stated explicitly or implicitly in a text or even

when and how they read for recreation and enjoy themselves. In this direction, Shehata says:

each student needs to have his or her own reading vision and knows his or her purposes for reading. When starting reading, student should know why s/he reads and what suitable and applicable strategies that help her or him to achieve her or his reading purposes (Script 9, Appendix C).

What is revealed by Shehata requires 'strategic readers' to:
1. Know 'why' they read or the purposes behind their reading e.g. reading for study or reading to perform a task.

2. Know 'how' to read or choose strategies that fit and help them in accomplish their purposes.

The same point is stressed by Zanhom as he explains that

strategic readers know and identify their purposes for reading and this strategic reading develops as a result of, on the one hand, extensive reading and, on the other hand, variation in reading purposes (Script 7, Appendix C).

Zanhom points out that variation in purposes and extensive reading or reading different types of texts in different fields boost and develop being a 'strategic reader' since students are used to and are familiar with accommodating their reading strategy to fit not only the purpose but also the type of text being read. In addition, El-Morsy clarifies a different perspective of 'strategic reading' by which it involves not only fitting reading strategy to reading purpose but also to reading form: silent or oral as he states that

certainly, reading has two types according to its form: silent and oral, and it has many types according to its purpose e.g. reading for study or reading to perform a task or reading for recreation and so on. Teachers should be concerned with

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all these types and all of these types may be practised in one session e.g. reading session may be concerned with reading for study and passing an exam and reading orally a piece of poem for recreation (Script 8, Appendix C).

This is in agreement with what is revealed by the theoretical analysis with respect of strategic reading literacy (See chapter three, strategic reading literacy).

In a different vein, table 6.3 (Items 14, 15) indicates that item (14) to display positive interest in free and independent reading and item (15) to display positive attitudes to reading, fall in the low twenty items in terms of their degree of importance as they got 91.7% and 88.7% respectively. Although these items fall at the bottom of what should be taught in RLCD, as seen by the respondents, they still have high positive response and hence are still seen as important targets to be considered.

Probing of the interviewees' answers indicates that all of them as table 6.4 (Item 7) agree upon the importance of taking students' attitudes and interests into account when planning and designing the curriculum of reading for secondary students. Also, they point out that curriculum designers should consider students' attitudes and interests in reading depending on previous research done in this area especially in Egypt. In this vein, Te'ama points out that

choosing reading content should be in congruence with students' interests since it is difficult for students to learn what they do not like. However, how can we consider all students' interests while they are varied and different? (...) Therefore, we need to adhere to general interests that have been revealed by previous research done in this area especially in Egypt as this exemplifies a common ground of interest between students (Script 2, Appendix C).

The same point is echoed by Younis as he states that

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reading attitudes and interests can be considered counting on what is revealed
by previous research done in this area (Script 1, Appendix C).

What is indicated by Te'ama and Younis stresses two critical issues in connection to students' attitudes and interests as follows:

1. Curriculum designers should take into account these attitudes to and interests in reading especially in choosing reading materials as this fuels students' motivation for reading. It is common understanding that students learn easily what is consistent with their interests and attitudes rather than what is against these interests and attitudes.

2. Curriculum designers need to count on what is revealed by previous research done about secondary students' attitudes and interests particularly in reading regarding reading literacy engagement and general principles to be considered to get students involved and motivated to read (See chapter three, reading literacy engagement).

In addition, El-Morsy justifies why students' interests and attitudes need to be considered when teaching reading as he says:

> *students should have motivation for reading. You can take your horse to a river but you can not force it to drink water. Likewise, students they may come to a reading session but you can not force them to read. Thus, students should have interest in reading and know why they read and what their purposes for reading are. In this case, they read purposefully and deeply to achieve their purposes otherwise they may read but with their fingers and eyes not minds (Script 8, Appendix C).*

El-Morsy is linking deep understanding and reading functionally with having interest in reading since otherwise students may read but in this case, reading becomes a kind of pretence or surface not deep reading. In addition, he indicates that explaining to students

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why reading is important and what they gain from reading in their lives raise motivation for and interest in reading. Abdelkadr agrees with El-Morsy as he explains that

curriculum designers should adapt a 'psychological curriculum' which starts from and considers students' attitudes and interests in reading that are derived from and identified by previous research. In this way, we can develop or choose reading materials which meet students' attitudes and interests and make teaching and learning of reading meaningful otherwise students read superficially without deep understanding (Script 4, Appendix C).

It can be inferred from El-Morsy's and Abdelkadr's quotes that considering students' attitudes to and interests in reading is a base for getting students involved and engaged in reading activity and as a result of that, developing deep learning/reading rather than surface learning/reading. Broadly speaking and from different perspective, Shehata indicates that

we should develop positive attitudes at secondary school. Students, through reading, need to display positive attitudes to the other as an idea or a culture or a race or a society (...) since all these positive attitudes help students to be developed affectively and have a database and background to make their own decisions/choices (Script 9, Appendix C).

This shows how important it is to develop students affectively through reading to be positive citizens. This strongly reveals the relationship between reading literacy and students' lives and how reading can improve their lives and how they can use it as a tool for living. (See chapter two) This can be broadly related to and supported by item 8 (Table 6.3) to benefit from reading in language use in everyday life.

Finally, table 6.3 (Item 16) reveals that to recognise literary texts from different cultures and tradition, got 83.4% positive response. Although this item falls at the bottom of what should be taught in RLCD, as seen by the respondents, it still has high positive response

and hence is still seen as an important target to be considered. This draws attention to including some international literary texts written by key figures by which students realise what makes them distinctive from their own literary texts and what they can learn about different cultures and traditions.

Still an important target that has been raised by three interviewees as table 6.4 (Item 8) reveals that is reading in content areas/reading in different fields and majors e.g. literature, social sciences, mathematics or sciences. In this vein, Younis states that

> *students should be taught how to read in content areas. It is common in our teaching to depend on literary and general informational reading materials. But, students should be taught to read in sciences, social sciences, or internet materials (Script 1, Appendix C).*

In addition, Te'ama points out that

> *mathematics needs reading skills which differ from what sciences require and both of them differ from reading literature or history and so on. Each type of text requires some reading skills that students should have (Script 2, Appendix C).*

Actually, this draws attention to discussion of a relevant issue which is teaching reading as a subject or across curriculum and the present research is concerned with reading as a subject matter not across curriculum. The second point to be made is Younis's and Te'ama quotes imply that the content of reading literacy needs to include different types of texts/ as will be indicated later in this chapter.

Furthermore, probing of the answers to open-ended question at the end of the reading literacy targets section as depicted in table 6.6 (Appendix C) reveals that most of what has been stated by the respondents to answer this question are repetitions of what is stated and covered on the questionnaire in closed questions. The argument is that items about main reading targets have been covered exhaustively and thoroughly by the

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questionnaire and the respondents wanted to restate and re-stress the importance of some reading targets. For example, 16 respondents to this question re-stressed the importance of literal and inferential understanding of a text and the same number (16) was devoted for using reading in language use. In addition, 13 respondents restated that students should read critically or creatively. This comes in agreement with what they rated on the questionnaire as depicted in table 6.3 indicating the reliability of the responses. This is stressed by 22 respondents who indicated that reading targets have been covered on the questionnaire. To conclude this point, teachers and supervisors, who answered the open-ended question (N = 65) which requested them to state what else they think should be taught in the curriculum of reading for secondary students in Egypt, re-stated and re-stressed the importance of what they have rated and in addition, some of them referred to that the questionnaire covered main targets exhaustively.

To sum up this section, most reading literacy targets (11 items) fall in the top thirty items stated on the questionnaire as table 6.3 reveals whereas, the rest (6 items) fall in the low thirty items. In addition, five items fall in the top ten items as table 6.3 (Items 1, 2, 3, 4, 5) reflects. This shows how far teachers and supervisors agree and accept what is stated on the questionnaire about what should be taught for students in question. In addition and broadly speaking, the interviewees' answers support what is rated by the respondents on the questionnaire about what should be taught in the curriculum of reading literacy for secondary students in Egypt. However, the respondents relatively prioritize the importance of literal and inferential understanding whereas the interviewees prioritize reflective. This supports what is revealed by the theoretical analysis as discussed in chapter three (Reading literacy targets section).

6.4.3. Reading literacy content/types of texts

As far as the reading literacy content is concerned in this section, it is worth reminding the reader that this section is guided by and contributes to answer the second research sub-question of "What types of texts (content) should be available through RLCD?" The table below indicates that how far the respondents rated types of texts according to the

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degree of importance counting on an aggregation of positive response (very important or important) and other responses (less important, not important, or undecided).

Table 6.7: Reading content/types of texts ranked by importance

N = 194

No.	Item Description	Positive Response		Other Response	
		Frequency	Percentage	Frequency	Percentage
1	Religious texts e.g. Quranic verses and Hadith texts.	191	99.0	2	1.0
2	Involve different types of texts.	185	97.4	5	2.6
3	Texts from Arabic literary heritage written by major writers.	185	95.4	9	4.6
4	Biographical and autobiographical texts about national and international key figures.	181	93.8	12	6.2
5	Texts which include international concerns and concepts e.g. peace, tolerance, or acceptance of others.	180	92.8	14	7.2
6	Texts that chosen by students according to their interests and attitudes	176	90.7	18	9.3
7	Informational texts e.g. descriptive texts and argumentative texts.	155	80.7	37	19.3
8	Media texts e.g. newspapers, magazines, and advertisements.	153	79.3	40	20.7
9	Moving image texts e.g. videos, television, and cinema films.	152	79.2	40	20.8

Continuation of table 6.7: Reading content/types of texts ranked by importance

N = 194

No.	Item Description	Positive responses		Other responses	
		Frequency	Percent	Frequency	Percent
10	Texts which are non-continuous e.g. lists, instructions, forms, graphs, maps, table, charts, and pictures.	151	77.8	43	22.2
11	Texts from different cultures and traditions written by major writers e.g. literary English texts by Shakespeare or literary Russian texts by Tolstoy, or literary African texts by Senghor or Achebe.	140	72.2	54	27.8
12	ICT-based texts/digital texts e.g. online texts, CDs/DVDs materials, or e-books.	138	71.5	55	28.5

Table 6.7 (Items 1, 2) reflects that item (1) the content of reading should include religious texts got 99% positive percent and item (2) include a range of types of texts which got 97.4% positive response. Both of these items fall in the top twelve items got positive response on the questionnaire. This reveals that different types of texts should be available for secondary students to read and to deal with through the curriculum of reading literacy especially religious texts. A plausible explanation is that religious texts have a particular importance for all Egyptian students, teachers, supervisors or even parents and also this type of text is used by the actual curriculum. The issue of including different types of texts in terms of their language, design, type, purpose, or topic is advocated in chapter four (reading literacy content section).

In addition, table 6.7 (Item 3) shows that texts from Arabic literary heritage written by major writers are important resources that should be available and included in the content of reading. This item got 95.4% percent and fell in the top twenty items which

got positive response on the questionnaire which reveals the degree of importance it takes. Once again a plausible explanation is that literary texts have a particular importance and unique characteristics which are appreciated by teachers and supervisors. Furthermore, table 6.7. (Items 4, 5) indicates the importance of biographical and autobiographical texts about national and international key figures (Item 4) and texts which include international concerns, issues, and concepts e.g. peace or tolerance (Item 5). They got 93.8% and 92.8% positive response successively. This reveals that these types of texts should be available and involved in the content of reading. A plausible explanation is that biographical or autobiographical texts are very interesting and telling students about lives of key figures in their world which gives them a clear picture about key role models. Also, texts which include international concerns help students to get better understanding of their social reality and deal positively with their communities and above all, the world around them.

In the same direction, table 6.7 (Item 6) reflects the importance of texts chosen by students according to their interests which got 90.7 positive response. This reveals that it is highly recommended to give students more room and opportunity to choose whatever type of text they want and teachers can start from these texts chosen by students to achieve reading targets and also they can balance between what students want and what teachers need to teach them. This motivates students to read and makes reading activity is a joyful one and get them involved deeply in reading activity. On the other hand, looking at table 6.7 (Items 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12) shows that these items fall in the bottom ten items which got positive response on the questionnaire. These items respectively refer to informational texts 80.7%, Media texts 79.3%, moving image texts 79.2%, non-continuous texts 77.8%, texts from different cultures and traditions 72.2%, and ICT-based texts/digital texts 71.5%. Although these items fall in the bottom ten items which got positive response on the questionnaire, they are still important since all of them got more than 70% percent of respondents' agreement upon their importance as reading resources.

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To sum up, the respondents rated types of texts that should be available for secondary students to read as follows: the content needs to involve a range of texts e.g. narrative and expository but religious and literary texts have the superiority over all types of texts. In addition, biographical or autobiographical texts; texts which include critical issues e.g. peace and tolerance and texts chosen by students according to their interests come in a second position after religious and literary ones, according to the respondents. Then the list can include informational, media, moving image, non-continuous, ICT-based informational texts or even texts from different cultures and traditions.

Consulting the answer to the open-ended question at the end of this section supports what the respondents have rated. First and foremost, 97 out of 194 respondents answered the question which requested them to state the most important five types of texts they think should be available for secondary students to read. Answering this question comes in congruence with what respondents have rated as table 6.8. (Appendix C) reveals, and this suggests there is reliability in the responses. 66 respondents stressed the importance of literary texts, 64 for religious texts, 61 for a range of texts, 43 for texts which involve critical issues, 40 for biographical or autobiographical texts, 35 for informational texts and 21 for texts chosen by students themselves. Concerning media texts, texts from different cultures and traditions, non-continuous texts, and digital ones as able 6.8 (Appendix C) reveals, this supports was rated by the respondents as they got lower stress than items above which indicates that these types of texts do not have the same degree of importance. Nevertheless, they are still important and can be included. Moreover, some respondents pointed out that all types of texts have equal importance and should be included in the curriculum of reading as table 6.8 (Appendix C) reflects.

Still a very important type of text which is highlighted by one respondent as table 6.8 (Appendix C) shows is "handwritten text". Since this types is only stressed by one respondent this may imply that there is no need to be included but the importance of this type of text comes since, on the one hand, Arabic handwriting has different forms of handwriting that should be known by students and on the other hand, Arabic heritage has many books and important references which had been written by hand before using the

press and many of these valuable materials are used by many researchers. Therefore, students should be equipped by knowing how to read these texts and how to benefit from them. Arabic handwriting has different chirographic or calligraphic or penmanship varieties of script e.g. Naskh, Thuluth and Ruq'ah/Riq'a (http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ruq'ah, June 19th, 2008). Each style has its own handwriting characteristics that should be known by students to read such handwritten texts.

Contrasting what is rated and revealed by the respondents to the interviewees' answers, table 6.9 (Item 1) reveals that 6 interviewees state that reading content should be free/open. In other words, students and teachers are free to choose and read whatever type of text they want or need.

Table 6.9: Summary of themes found in answering questions about a content of a curriculum of reading

N = 9

No.	Themes	Interviewees								
		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
1	Free content	x	x				x	x	x	x
2	A range of texts			x	x					
3	Considering students' interests and needs					x	x			
4	Counting on professional teachers							x	x	
5	Considering reading targets		x						x	

Younis explains that

> *students should be free to read whatever they want and then they provide reports about their readings each week or month. Students need free content in all fields (Script 1, Appendix C).*

The same point is stressed by Shehata when he indicates that

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the content should include informational, technological, social, economic, or religious texts (...) It should be varied as many as variation in different fields (Script 9, Appendix C).

A plausible explanation for this opinion is that it achieves some important goals: meeting students' reading interests, motivating them for reading and raising interaction during reading sessions between teacher, student, and text they read within classroom context.

From a different perspective, Te'ama states that

no matter what type of text students read (...) but what really matters are skills that students acquire. The issue is what students learn when they read texts not the type of text they use. The current age is concerned with skilled people not with content itself (Script 2, Appendix C).

What is more important from Te'ama's point of view is 'how' students read rather than 'what' information they get from reading. Thus, the content should serve as a base for developing reading strategies not for getting information in the first instance. However, reading strategies do not work in emptiness. In other words, we can not develop these strategies without reading content e.g. if we need to examine skimming as a strategy for speed reading then students need to get the gist of a text they read and this gist is related not only to the content itself but also to the strategy as well. Teaching reading should balance between 'how' and 'what' student read.

In addition, Zanhom highlights professional teachers' role in guiding their students to choose reading materials (Table 6.9, Item 4). He indicates that

it is very important when teaching reading that professional teachers guide their students to choose suitable materials. Therefore, imposing a certain textbook for

reading and assessing students at the middle or end of the course in its content is
not acceptable any more from my point of view. Instead, students should use
classroom, school, public or even home libraries that presumably include
different types of texts in different fields (Script 7, Appendix C).

It can be argued that professional teachers know what students need and what targets they want to achieve and therefore, their role is very critical in teaching reading to guide students in choosing reading materials since what students want may not match what they need. In addition, it can be inferred that students need to read a range of different types of texts from different disciplines. Also, a rejection of the idea of imposing a certain textbook(s) on students to read is clear since this may limit their thinking and not fit their interests.

El-Morsy summarizes what is stated by Te'ama and Zanhom when he adds that

the content is not important in itself but what is really important is that using this
content as a starting point for developing deep understanding. However, this
requires professional teachers as a critical factor in doing so (Script 8, Appendix
C).

as depicted in table 6.9 (Item 5) To conclude this point, the interviewees indicate that the reading content should be open/free and students choose or read whatever type of text they want but this is conditioned by three conditions: professional teachers who guide students in their choices, assessing students' choices and reading and above all, achieving reading targets.

In this direction, Abu Bakr justifies why the content should vary and involve different types of texts when he indicates that

achieving targets of teaching reading requires involving different types of texts
i.e. all literary texts e.g. poems, stories or even essays and informational texts, or

texts related to students culture and environment. In addition, texts that help students to bridge communication with their societies and world (...) Moreover, students need to read religious texts (...) and newspapers, magazines and internet/digital texts (Script 3, Appendix C).

The same point is echoed by Abdelkadr as he points out that

as we are ambitious to achieve reading targets at secondary school, the content should meet and suit these targets. It is difficult to achieve these targets through one textbook imposed on students but the content should be varied and involve many books in different disciplines even the same book should include different types of texts e.g. literary or informational (Script 4, Appendix C).

From another angle, El-Zany indicates that

the current content is very limited. I advocate that students choose different materials to read according to their attitudes and interests in reading. Above all, I urge designers to make an e-book/digital book that can be loaded to the internet and has web of links that refer students and give them access to whatever topic or type of text they want (Scrip 5, Appendix C).

The most important point that is stressed by El-Zany is that the content needs to be varied to meet students' interests and as he points out the best way to do so is using computers and internet where an e-book can be loaded and used by students. This idea has some merits e.g. saving effort and time, giving students the opportunity to access at any time and get or choose any type of text from any discipline by just clicking and

following links provided. However, this relies on digital texts and ignore the other types of text e.g. printed books, newspapers or magazines since each type has its own way of structure and presenting information and the curriculum of reading needs to be concerned with all types of texts.

Moreover, Awad points out an important issue that is balancing between what students 'want' and what they 'need' as students may know what they want but do not know what they need especially in the language of mother tongue. In other words, curriculum designers should balance between students' interests and reading targets they state. In this vein, she states that

> *the content should meet students' interests and suit targets behind teaching of reading. It should balance between what students want and what they need to learn. In addition, designers should consider norms of quality of texts being presented e.g. variation to satisfy differences among students in their interests, intelligences, cultures or personalities (Script 6, Appendix C).*

This is depicted in table 6.9 (Item 3) It can be inferred that curriculum designers may make a list of more relevant and suitable books or whatever reading materials that teachers with students can choose from. This serves as a starting point in compromising between what students want and what they need.

To summarize, the interviewees reveal some important issues, which are not covered in the questionnaire, concerning the content of reading as follows:

1. The content should be open/free and students can choose or read whatever type of text they want to meet their reading interests and thus, they reject the idea of imposing a certain textbook(s) on students to read which is used by the current curriculum since, this has two limitations: it does not meet students' interests and does not achieve reading targets which require students to be familiar with different types of texts in their lives.

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2. Highlighting the role of teachers in guiding their students in their choices and reading which balances between what students want and what they really need. In this vein, teachers can make a list of types of texts that students need to recognize and read or alternatively, they can rely on readings lists suggested by the curriculum designers themselves.

3. Stressing the importance of reading skills over the content itself. In other words, the content is a starting point and serves as a base to develop the skills. Actually, there is an overlap between reading content and reading skills as it is understood that reading skills, understanding or interest can not be developed in emptiness in a sense that they can not be taught without reading content. Teaching reading should balance between 'how' students read a text and 'what' they get from it.

4. It can be inferred that the curriculum designers need to suggest a basic 'list of readings' that includes the minimum level that students need. This suggested 'list of readings' may rely on the types of texts covered on the questionnaire and approved by the respondents and they can give more priority for the types that got more stress and positive response from the respondents e.g. literary texts, religious texts, or informational texts. Hence, teachers can use this list as a starting and basic point in acquainting students with characteristic features of different types of texts and on the other hand, in compromising between what students need and what they want. Students can add to this list from their own choices or teachers can suggest further readings or guide students according to the situation and the targets to be achieved.

6.4.4 Reading literacy instruction

This section is guided by the third research sub-question of 'How can reading literacy be taught (instruction) in secondary school in Egypt? In other words, what are the guidelines that can be used to facilitate teaching and learning of reading at secondary

schools in Egypt? In this vein, the researcher intends to clarify some general guidelines and considerations for how reading can be taught. The table below indicates how far the respondents rated teaching and learning of reading considerations according to the degree of importance counting on aggregation of positive response (very important or important) and other responses (less important, not important, or undecided).

Table 6.10: Reading instruction considerations ranked by importance

N = 194

No.	Item Description	Positive Response		Other Response	
		Frequency	Percent	Frequency	Percent
1	Treating teaching and learning of reading as complementary to other kinds of language use i.e. listening, speaking, and writing.	193	99.5	1	.5
2	Developing positive attitudes to reading.	193	99.5	1	.5
3	Modeling to students how to use reading to improve their language use in their everyday life.	191	98.5	3	1.5
4	Creating interactive opportunities between and among teacher, text, and students e.g. peer interactions, and teacher-student dialogue.	188	97.9	4	2.1
5	Boosting effective strategies for extending meaning e.g. judging or developing acquired information by writing a short story or an essay.	189	97.4	5	2.6
6	Developing positive interests in voluntary and independent reading	187	96.9	6	3.1
7	Developing extensive reading of texts.	187	96.9	7	3.6
8	Promoting reading fluency i.e. speed, accuracy, and prosody.	186	96.4	7	3.6
9	Concentrating on developing deep understanding/intensive reading of texts.	182	94.2	11	5.7

Continuation of table 6.10: Reading instruction considerations ranked by importance

N = 194

No.	Item Description	Positive responses		Other responses	
		Frequency	Percent	Frequency	Percent
10	Developing strategic reading / reading for different purposes.	183	94.3	11	5.7
11	Emphasizing 'how' students read a text as well as 'what' they learn from a text.	182	94.2	11	5.7
12	Building literate reading contexts within and outside school e.g. seeking parents' support for their children's learning.	180	92.8	14	7.2
13	Promoting effective strategies for constructing meaning e.g. clarifying, self-questioning and creating mental pictures of text structures.	175	90.7	18	9.3
14	Developing effective strategies for anticipating meaning e.g. previewing and surveying, setting a purpose, searching for clues, activating prior knowledge, and making predictions.	173	89.2	21	10.8

As far as reading literacy instruction is concerned, table 6.10 (Items 8, 9, 10, 11, 12) indicates that these five items fall in the top ten items which got positive response on the questionnaire. The table reveals that treating teaching and learning of reading as complementary to other kinds of language use (Item 1) and developing positive attitudes to reading (Item 2) both got 99.5% percent which is the highest positive response on the questionnaire of all. This means that teachers and supervisors strongly stress not only the

importance of integration among language skills and developing positive attitudes to reading but also they give them the highest priority.

A plausible explanation is that, in reality, teaching of reading can not be separated as a language skill from the other language skills i.e. listening, speaking, and writing since all these skills are used to teach or assess reading literacy. On the contrary, considering teaching reading as complementary to the other language skills makes reading literacy instruction (RLI) meaningful as students can benefit from reading in their language use in everyday life. Likewise, students who have positive attitudes to reading are likely and willing to learn extensively and intensively better than those who have not or those who have poor or negative ones.

Furthermore, table 6.10 reflects that modelling to students how to use reading to improve their language use in everyday life (Item 3), boosting effective strategies for extending meaning e.g. judging or developing acquired information by writing a short story or an essay (Item 5), and creating interactive opportunities between and among teacher, text, and students e.g. peer interactions and teacher-student dialogue (Item 4), all got 98.5%, 97.4%, and 97.9%, successively. The respondents strongly go with those three critical issues in RLI.

In addition, the latter item demonstrates the importance of creating and weaving interactive instructional situations within classroom environment and developing interactive learning strategies e.g. peer-interactions which help students to be active and interact not only with teachers and texts they read but also among themselves. This point (Table 6.11., Item 12) is made explicitly by Awad as she points out

it is very important to offer interactive activities before, while, and after reading in addition, some extra activities for free reading (Script 6, Appendix C).

In addition, this point can be related to what is indicated by Abdelkadr who posits that

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teaching reading at secondary school should be concerned with learning for reading rather than teaching of reading. In a sense that students should respond positively and interact not only with their teachers but also with each other and with texts they read (Script 4, Appendix C).

Awad and Abdelkadr touch a very critical issue in RLI that is interaction between students, teachers, and texts they read within classroom content. Thus, RLI needs to create interactive opportunities for students to get involved and engaged in reading activity and above all, interact with teachers, texts they read and classmates. This issue is advocated in the present research since reading literacy is viewed as a meaning construction process through interaction between teachers, students, texts they read within classroom content (Ruddell & Unrau, 1994; 2004) (See chapter two, interactive models).

Table 6.11: Summary of themes found in answering questions about reading literacy instruction

N = 9

No.	Themes	Interviewees								
		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
1	Teaching students deep understanding				x					x
2	Teaching students different techniques to be used before, during and after reading.	x				x			x	x
3	Teaching students meta-comprehension strategies						x			
4	Emphasizing autonomous learning/independent reading strategies				x				x	
5	Emphasizing cooperative learning	x		x	x					
6	Teaching students how to be fluent readers (speed, accuracy, prosody)				x					
7	Using constructivism strategies e.g. activating prior knowledge			x		x				
8	Emphasizing reciprocal teaching			x						
9	Using problem-solving strategy			x						
10	Combining variant strategies									x
11	Using brainstorming strategy	x				x				
12	Using interactive activities				x		x			
13	All equal and the most important thing are professional teachers.		x					x		

Continuing with RLI, table 6.10 (Items 6, 7, 8, 9) points out that these four items fall in the top twenty items which got positive response on the questionnaire which reflects the degree of their importance as rated by the respondents. These items are as follows:

developing positive interests in voluntary and independent reading (Item 6), developing extensive reading of texts (Item 7), promoting reading fluency i.e. speed, accuracy, and expression (Item 8), concentrating on developing deep understanding/intensive reading of texts (Item 9), and all of them got more than 95% positive response which reveals how far they are important to be considered in RLI for students in question.

Relating what is rated by the respondents about concentrating on developing deep understanding/intensive reading of texts (Item 9) to what is revealed by the interviewees (Table 6.11, Items 1, 5, 11) reflects the importance of promoting deep understanding. In this vein, Shehata advocates that

> *students can work in small groups inside the classroom to discuss different ideas. Reading session should be session for dialogue, discussion, brainstorming. Variation and multiplicity should be the attribute of reading instruction and the aim behind this is to develop deep and divergent thinking and hence make each student has his or her own vision and thought (Case 9, Appendix C).*

It can be inferred that Shehata stresses the importance of using a variety of techniques that would be effective and raise interaction between teachers, texts, students, and among students themselves. Also, it could help in promoting deep learning/reading and develop students as thinkers.

In addition, table 6.10 (Items 10, 11) reveals that teaching reading needs to developing strategic reading/reading for different purposes (Item 10), emphasizing 'how' students read a text as well as 'what' they learn from a text (Item 11). These two items fall in the top thirty items on the questionnaire which got more than 94% positive percent. This reflects clearly the importance of two critical issues that RLI needs to consider: balancing between 'how' and 'what' students read and promoting 'strategic reading' (See chapter three, reading literacy strategy).

Going further with RLI, table 6.10 (Items 12, 13, 14) shows the importance of building literate reading contexts within and outside school e.g. seeking parents' support for their children (item 12), promoting effective strategies for constructing meaning e.g. clarifying or self questioning (Item 13), and developing effective strategies for anticipating meaning e.g. previewing or setting a purpose for reading (Item 14). These items got 92.8%, 90.7%, 89.2% positive response respectively. The point to be made is that although these three items come at the bottom of reading literacy teaching and learning considerations list as rated by the respondents, they are still important since all of them got high positive response which is more than 89% percent.

It can be noticed that most reading teaching and learning considerations (11 out of 14 items, Table 6.10), stated on the questionnaire, fall in the top thirty items except the last three items fall in the low thirty items. In addition, two of them (Table 6.10, Items 1, 2) got the highest positive response on the questionnaire of all. This reflects not only how far these considerations are important but also to what extent they are acceptable and supported by teachers and supervisors in practice.

Relating these points to one derived from answering the open-ended question at the end of this section on the questionnaire which requested the respondents to state any considerations that they think should be taken into account when teaching and learning of reading literacy at secondary schools in Egypt. The researcher found that all respondents who answered the question (N = 42) re-stated and re-stressed what has been covered on the questionnaire as table 6.12 (Appendix C) reveals since 12 respondents pointed out that the main things have been covered on the questionnaire. This means that the questionnaire covered all main and important considerations exhaustively and comprehensively, and this supports its validity.

Comparing and contrasting the respondents' responses to the interviewees' answers nonetheless indicates that they raised new issues which not covered on the questionnaire or mentioned by the respondents to the open-ended question. Looking at the interviewees' answers as table 6.11 (Item 13) reveals that two interviewees indicate that

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no matter which teaching or learning strategy are used, what really matter is 'professional teachers' who choose and adapt or even encourage a certain technique or a set of techniques in a certain situation to achieve a certain target(s). In this direction, Te'ama posits that

> *there is no best or superior teaching method in reading since each method has its own goals and audience but professional teachers are the touchstone of choosing effective method(s) (Script 2, Appendix C).*

In addition, Zanhom echoes what is revealed by Te'ama and adds more about the idea of 'professional teachers' when he points out that

> *teachers are the touchstone of teaching reading. I mean, professional teachers, who know philosophical and theoretical bases that underpin their choices. Then, no matter which strategy is used but what really matter are those teachers who are aware of what they choose but they may adapt different techniques such as metacognitive strategies, problem solving, discovery, discussion, or even brainstorming technique (Script 7, Appendix C).*

It can be inferred that Te'ama and Zanhom consider two critical points in teaching and learning of reading to be:
1. There are many techniques, methods and strategies for teaching and learning of reading e.g. reciprocal teaching or brainstorming, each of these has its own goals and audience for example, if the goal is to make students aware of their reading behaviour then teachers need to develop meta-reading strategies.

2. They highlight the role of teachers in adapting a certain method(s) to achieve a certain target(s) in a certain situation. This requires qualified teachers or professional ones who are well trained on how, when, and why to employ such methods.

Relating to the idea of 'professional teachers', Abu Bakr adds that

our teaching should be in congruence with what research has said about how
students learn and how learning happens (...) In this context, teacher can use
strategies such as problem solving, cooperative learning, constructive learning,
reciprocal teaching, or mapping (Script 3, appendix C).

Those teachers need to be acquainted with what is revealed and proved to be effective by
research and practice in teaching and learning of reading either pre-service or in-service
teachers. Moreover, El-Morsy says that

it is very important to promote autonomous learning where students before
reading can choose the text they want to read (...) and identify some questions to
be answered through reading (...) and after reading they can apply acquired
information to serve language use e.g. writing an essay (Script 8, Appendix C).

Actually, what is referred by El-Morsy as autonomous learning stresses the importance
of independence in reading. In other words, RLI needs to develop reading literacy as a
tool for life-long learning and living since students need to read in everyday life in and
out of school relying on their abilities. This is the essence of reading literacy concept
advocated in the present research (See chapter two, what is reading literacy?).

To sum up, what is rated by the respondents on the questionnaire and what is revealed
by the interviewees can be summarized as that teaching reading requires 'professional
teachers' who are well qualified and understand what underpins their choices to promote
learning of reading literacy at secondary schools. This requires acquainting those
teachers with what is reflected by research and practice to be effective in learning of
reading either pre-service or in-service teachers. Teachers need to take into account the
following considerations in teaching and learning of reading:

1. Bearing in mind that teaching language is a whole thing and then teaching
   reading is a complementary perspective to the other language skills i.e. listening,
   speaking, and writing.

2. Modelling to students where appropriate, to help them accomplish gradual independence in learning reading which in turn promotes life-long learning and using reading as a tool for living.

3. Getting students involved and engaged in learning reading through creating and offering interactive opportunities whereby students turn not only from passive to active action but also from active to interactive one and interact with classmates, teachers, and texts they read. In this vein, students need to work in small groups as suggested by some of the interviewees.

4. Encouraging students to read and make them feeling how reading is important and related to their life through assuring literate contexts/environments by which students find 'reading support' or 'fertile soil' to read in their classrooms, schools, homes, and communities.

5. Bearing in mind that the overall target behind RLI at secondary school is developing students as 'comprehenders', 'strategic', 'interested' and eventually 'fluent readers'.

6. Advocating 'deep learning' approach against surface one which develops students as 'comprehenders' and helps them not only to understand or reflect on what they read but also to benefit from reading in their language use in everyday life.

7. Evoking 'avid readers' who have enthusiasm and vigorous pursuit in reading by prompting their motivation and interests in reading which results in improving their attitudes to reading and eventually, reading freely and independently. In this vein, teachers can use what is revealed by research and practice about student's motivation and interests in reading (See chapter three, reading literacy engagement).

8. Developing 'strategic readers' who are aware of their reading strategies, purposes, texts they read and how to fit their strategy to purpose or the type of text being read.

9. Relating to 'strategic readers', RLI needs to improve extensive reading in which students read different types of texts in variant disciplines, for different purposes, and in variant situations.

10. Improving 'fluent readers' which reflects how far students are comprehenders, strategic, and interested readers since reading fluency is concerned with reading speedily, accurately, and expressively.

11. Developing comprehender, strategic, interested, and fluent readers is one face of the reading process, and the other face is meta-reading by which students are aware of and self-control their reading.

12. Balancing between developing 'how' or reading processes/strategies and 'what' or information acquired through reading a text since they are two interrelated perspectives of teaching and learning of reading.

13. Above all, promoting autonomous learning/reading and developing independence in reading and using it as a tool for life-long learning and living.

6.4.5 Reading literacy assessment

This section is guided by and contributes to answer the research sub-question of "How can reading literacy be assessed?" In other words, what assessment considerations that should be taken into account when assessing reading literacy. The table below indicates how far the respondents rated reading literacy assessment considerations according to

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the degree of importance counting on aggregation of positive response (very important or important) and other responses (less important, not important, or undecided).

Table 6.13: Reading literacy assessment considerations ranked by

importance

N = 194

No.	Item Description	Positive Response		Other Response	
		Frequency	Percent	Frequency	Percent
1	Examine reading fluency i.e. speed, accuracy, and prosody	187	96.4	7	3.6
2	Use oral activity in reading assessment e.g. oral reading, and oral retelling or conversations.	186	95.9	8	4.1
3	Be used during the course of study to plan/revise the next stages of the course.	186	95.9	8	4.1
4	Involve different types of texts.	185	95.9	8	4.1
5	Examine attitudes to reading.	184	95.8	8	4.2
6	Consider self-assessment as an important method in reading assessment.	184	95.8	8	4.2
7	Consider observations made by teacher in reading assessment e.g. observation lists or notes.	184	95.3	9	4.7
8	Consider written activity by students as a critical method in reading assessment e.g. reporting a book, and summarizing an article.	83	94.3	11	5.7
9	Consider formative assessment for reading as complementary to the summative assessment of reading.	182	93.8	12	6.2

Continuation of table 6.13: Reading literacy assessment considerations ranked by importance

N = 194

No.	Item Description	Positive responses		Other responses	
		Frequency	Percent	Frequency	Percent
10	Examine reading interests in voluntary and independent reading.	180	93.3	13	6.7
11	Consider listening activity by students as an important method in reading assessment e.g. answering questions after listening to a text / passage.	182	93.8	12	6.2
12	Use standardized tests as a useful method for testing of reading.	179	93.2	13	6.8
13	Assess students on individual bases.	179	92.7	14	7.3
14	Examine strategic reading. i.e. Accommodate reading strategies to reading purposes e.g. seeking information, literary experience, or performing a task.	176	90.7	18	9.3
15	Share assessment criteria with students.	167	90.7	18	9.3
16	Examine deep understanding.	178	91.7	16	8.3
17	Use texts which are NOT be shown to students during the course of study.	164	85.0	29	15.0

Continuation of table 6.13: Reading literacy assessment considerations ranked by importance

N = 194

No.	Item Description	Positive responses		Other responses	
		Frequency	Percent	Frequency	Percent
18	Use portfolios, collections of evidence about student's reading practices, in reading assessment.	164	84.5	30	15.5
19	Use Computer-based tests as a useful method in reading assessment.	159	82.0	35	18.0
20	Share assessment criteria with parents.	146	75.6	47	24.4

As far as reading literacy assessment (RLA) is concerned, table 6.13 (Items 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7) indicates that all of these items got more than 95% positive response on the questionnaire. These items stress that RLA should examine reading fluency i.e. speed, accuracy, and prosody/expression (Item 1), use oral activity in reading assessment e.g. oral reading or oral retelling (Item 2), be used during the course of study to plan / revise the next stage of the course (Item 3), involve different types of texts/ (Item 4), examine attitudes to reading (Item 5), consider self-assessment as an important method in reading assessment (Item 6), and consider observations made by teachers in reading assessment e.g. observation lists or notes (Item 7). It is very important when assessing students' learning of learning to consider all these points.

Using assessment during the course of study to plan and revise the next stages (Item 3), has been stressed by the interviewees, El-Zany indicates the importance of formative assessment for students as he explains that

formative assessment helps students, on the one hand, to be familiar with taking exams and, on the other hand, to assess themselves and find out what they have achieved and what still needs to be accomplished (Script 5, Appendix C).

Moreover, Younis adds that "formative assessment helps especially in corrective reading" (Script 1, Appendix C). Employing formative assessment whereby both teachers and students know what they accomplished and what is left to be achieved and how. In other words, formative assessment informs not only teachers and teaching but also students and learning to get feedback and take proper steps toward reaching their purpose from reading. In addition, counting on self-assessment done by students is an important method in assessing students' learning of reading (Item 6). This is stressed by Awad as she says: "students should be involved in assessment" (Script 6, appendix C).

Continuing with assessment considerations, table 6.13 (Item 8) reflects that RLA should consider written activity by students as a critical method in reading assessment e.g. reporting a book or summarizing an article since this item got 94.3% positive response and fell in the top thirty items on the questionnaire. This reveals how far reading is complementary to the other language skills and can not be taught without this sort of integration among these skills. In this case, students can express, in writing, their understanding, thoughts, and ideas, and they may take notes for exams or summarize a text they read and so on. Eventually, written assessment is complementary to the oral one and only by both assessing both reading forms, oral and silent can be full assessment achieved.

In addition, table 6.13 (Items 9, 10, 11, 12) refers to the fact that all these items got more than 92% positive response and this reveals how important these items are and they should be considered when assessing reading at secondary schools in Egypt. These items are as follows: considering formative assessment for reading as complementary to the summative of reading (Item 9), examining reading interests in voluntary and independent reading (Item 10), considering listening activity by students as an important method in reading assessment e.g. answering questions after listening to a text or a

passage (Item 11), and using standardized tests as a useful method for testing of reading (Item 12). This reflects how far these considerations need to be taken into account when assessing reading at secondary schools.

Looking at table 6.13 (Items 13, 14, 15, 16) shows that these reading assessment items fall in the low twenty items on the questionnaire. Assessment needs to assess students on individual bases (Item 13), examine strategic reading/accommodating reading strategies to reading purposes (Item 14), share assessment criteria with students (Item 15), and examine deep understanding (Item 16). All these items got more than 90% positive response however, and this reflects the degree of importance and how far these considerations are acceptable by the practitioners/ respondents in the field.

On the other hand, and as table 6.13 (Items 17, 18, 19, 20) reveals these items come at the bottom of assessment considerations list on the questionnaire in comparison to the rest of the other assessment items and also fall in the low twelve items on the questionnaire as a whole but are still important to be considered as they got more than 75% positive response. This reveals that it is important that assessment needs to use texts which are not be shown to students during the course of study (Item 17), share assessment criteria with parents (Item 20), use portfolios, collections of evidence about reading practices, in reading assessment (Item 18), and use computer-based tests as a useful method in reading assessment (Item 19), since they got 85%, 84.5%, 82%, and 75.6% respectively.

Probing data derived from answering the open-ended question at the end of this section reveals that all respondents (42) to this question re-stated or repeated items which have been covered on the questionnaire and 17 respondents stressed that every thing has been covered on the questionnaire as table 6.14 (Appendix C) reveals. This reflects how far the questionnaire covers important and relevant reading literacy assessment considerations and this supports its validity.

Consulting the interviewees' answer in table 6.15 reveals that they support not only most of what is covered, either directly or in directly, on the questionnaire regarding the assessment but also they stress the importance of some issues such as assessing deep understanding and fluency in oral reading. Probing their answers reveals that six of them stress the importance of assessment against pre-defined targets in the curriculum of reading as table 6.15 (Item 1) reflects. This point is not directly covered in the questionnaire but it has been covered in an indirect way through stating that assessment should examine reading targets e.g. reading fluency, deep understanding and strategic reading as table 6.13 (Items 1, 14, 16) reveals.

Table 6.15: Summary of themes found in answering questions about reading literacy assessment

N = 9

No.	Themes	Interviewees								
		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
1	Assess against the stated targets	x	x	x	x	x	x			
2	Use formative assessment	x	x	x		x			x	x
3	Concentrate on deep understanding			x	x		x		x	
4	Count on variation in methods and techniques		x	x	x	x			x	
5	Consider observations done by teachers in the class as part of assessment	x								
6	Use free texts that have not been seen by students during the course of study	x			x			x		
7	Explain assessment criteria to students to assess texts against them									x
8	Use self assessment						x			x
9	Assessing silent and oral reading								x	

In this direction, Younis states that

assessment should be conducted against pre-defined curriculum targets e.g.
speed reading requires a test in speed, reading for study needs a test in reading
for study or reading performance requires an oral test and so on (Script 1,
Appendix C).

Younis answers the question of 'what' should be covered by the assessment reading. He says that the assessment needs to be conducted against reading targets stated in the curriculum. The same point is echoed by Te'ama as he indicates that

assessment should be conducted against reading targets. Assessment should be
comprehensive and exhaustive for all stated reading targets not cognitive targets
only. Also, it should be continuous before, while, and after reading. Above all, it
should involve assessing students' performance through performance/oral test
(Script 2, Appendix C).

It can be inferred from the Younis and Te'ama's quotes that the scope of RLA should cover reading literacy targets: reading for meaning, strategic reading, fluency, attitudes and interests, and meta-reading. In addition, they refer to a critical issue in assessment which is formativeness or continuity in assessing reading before, during, or after. This point will be discussed later in this section which supports what is rated by the respondents on the questionnaire as depicted in table 10.13 (Item 3).

Continuing with 'what' assessment covers, El-Morsy explains that assessment covers two main areas according to the form that reading takes orally or silently. He points out that

assessing oral reading depends on reading performance i.e. speed, accuracy,
articulation, expression, and considering punctuation. Whereas, assessing silent
reading depends on measuring deep understanding e.g. making inferences
behind lines, criticising, appreciating texts being read. Also, if students can give
a summary of what they read or retell orally or give a comment on what they

read would be effective in assessing reading (...) The overall aim of assessment is to give students confidence in their abilities to understand what and why they read and above all, to apply or benefit from their reading in their lives not getting information only (Script 8. Appendix C).

It can be inferred from El-Morsy's quote that:

1. Stressing the importance of assessing oral reading, this is not concerned by the current curriculum. In addition, he gives examples of the main concerns/targets that should be of interest in assessment of oral reading e.g. speed, accuracy, or expression. This comes in agreement with what is rated by the respondents as revealed in table 6.13 (Item 1).

2. Concentrating on assessing deep understanding in silent reading. This is consistent with what is reflected by the respondents on the questionnaire as explained in table 6.13. (Item 16).

3. Considering both written and oral work done or performed by students e.g. summarizing an article or retelling orally what students have read as assessment techniques which suit both reading forms silent and oral. This supports what is rated by the respondents on the questionnaire as revealed in table 6.13 (Items 2, 8).

4. Explaining the aim behind assessment which is to feedback to students about their reading level which helps them to know where they stand at, what they accomplished and what is left to be achieved.

What is revealed by El-Morsy is also stressed by Abu Bakr as he suggests not only to assess both forms of reading but also he stresses the need for variation in assessment methods and techniques as depicted in table 6.15 (Items, 3, 4, 9). He posits that

we assess students in their ability of deep understanding and to be convinced that those students can analyze critically, appreciate, judge, or even create, or perform fluent oral reading. Thus, we need different types of questions to be asked e.g. oral or written, objective or subjective. Also, students can be assessed using different methods e.g. e-mails, portfolios, or observations lists. Assessment should vary its methods and techniques to make sure of measuring different perspectives of students' learning (Script 3, appendix C).

Extension to the same direction and echoing the same meaning, Abdelkadr indicates that

assessment should concentrate on deep understanding and adapt variant methods oral or written, objective or subjective (Script 4, Appendix C).

Actually, what is revealed by Abu Bakr and Abdelkadr comes in congruence with what is rated by the respondents on the questionnaire as depicted in table 6.13 (Items 2, 7, 8, 16, 18).

In addition, Awad adds to the previous meaning that students should be part of the assessment (Item 8, Table 6.15). In other words, they need to assess themselves counting on self-assessment. She points out that

students should be involved in assessment. Also, assessment should concentrate on deep understanding i.e. criticism, interaction, creativity, and productivity (Script 6, appendix C).

Awad stresses not only assessing deep reading but also gauging creativity or productivity depending on what students read and how they relate information stated in a text to their prior knowledge and benefit from it in their language use in everyday life. What Awad indicates is supporting what is rated by the respondents as table 6.13 (Item 6, 16) reveals. Awad sums up the above discussion as she points out that

assessment should be consistent with targets and the general assessment standards e.g. comprehensiveness and variation. Also, it should consider the nature of reading itself where it measures different levels of understanding and different perspectives i.e. cognitive, affective and skills (Script 6, Appendix C).

From a different perspective, Younnes indicates that assessment of reading requires involvement of teachers' grades or scores given to students in the classroom during the course of study which depends on students' work and performance (Item 5, Table 6.15). He points out that

coursework done by students in the classroom during the course of study should get 50% percent of the total assessment degree given to students however, and according to the nature of the Egyptian society 20% or 25% percent would be fine. Also, formative assessment helps especially in corrective reading (Script 1, Appendix C).

The idea of assessing coursework done by students within the classroom can be related in a way to some points on the questionnaire. It supports observations done by teachers and portfolios as important methods of assessment as table 6.13 (Item 7, 18) reveals. In addition, the idea of formative assessment is stressed by El-Zany when he explains

formative assessment helps students, on the one hand, to be familiar with taking exams and, on the other hand, to assess themselves and find out what they have achieved and what still needs to be accomplished (Script 5, Appendix C).

This supports what is rated by the respondents regarding formative assessment (Item 8, Table 6.13)

To conclude, there are six main points which can be drawn from the foregoing discussion. These are: comprehensiveness of 'what' need to be assessed; variation in

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'how' to assess, formativeness; using free-content texts; involvement of students or parents; and prioritizing assessing deep understanding and oral reading performance. In more detail:

1. Assessment of reading or for reading should be conducted against pre-defined reading targets in the curriculum. In other words, it should cover and balance between measuring all mentioned targets stated in the curriculum of reading cognitively, affectively, or skilfully. This point is revealed by the interviewees, supported by the respondents on the questionnaire, and advocated by the theoretical analysis (See chapter three, reading literacy assessment).

2. Assessment of reading or for reading should be varied in terms of its methods and techniques. This variation is required by the comprehensiveness of the assessment itself in order to assess different perspectives of reading. Once again, this variation is stated by the interviewees, sustained by the respondents on the questionnaire, and explained by the theoretical analysis (See chapter three, reading literacy assessment).

3. In addition, it is very important to be formative which serves many goals e.g. feedback to students about their reading strengths and weaknesses, used to revise and plan ongoing RLI, or considered to be complementary to the summative assessment. Both the interviewees and the respondents agree upon the importance of using formative or 'assessment for reading', which is also advocated by the theoretical analysis (See chapter three, reading literacy assessment).

4. The interviewees give more stress to the need for concentrating on assessing deep reading over literal understanding. Also, they stress the importance of assessing oral reading performance or fluency in oral reading. This comes in an agreement with what is revealed by the interviewees and the respondents and also by the theoretical analysis regarding reading literacy fluency (See chapter three, reading literacy fluency).

5. Thus, it is very important to use free-content texts to reveal the actual reading abilities and avoid stressing and relying on memorization of factual explicit information stated in texts being read. Above all, to make sure that students are capable of using their reading as a tool for learning.

6. Students need to be part of the assessment process in terms of sharing assessment criteria with teachers and using self-assessment to judge themselves against pre-defined targets. Also, parents need to be involved in sharing assessment criteria which makes them aware of what their children need to accomplish and hence, help them to achieve that through offering a literate environment to their children.

6.4.6 Analyzing the interview general questions

Looking at the answers to the question about general principles that can be considered when designing a reading literacy curriculum in table 6.16. In this vein, Younis states that

> *all what should be considered when designing a curriculum is that: identifying reading strategies, open/free content, specifying assessment techniques, and guide students to read what they are interested in according to previous research done in this field (Script 1, appendix C).*

Younis highlights four issues (Items 2, 3, 4, 7, Table 6.16) that should be taken into account when planning a curriculum of reading these are:

1. 'What to read' or what types of texts/ should be available for students to read and deal with.
2. 'How to read' or introducing different reading strategies to students.
3. 'How to assess' reading.
4. Teachers' role in guiding students to read according to their reading interests.

Table 6.16: Summary of themes found in answering question about general principles for designing a reading literacy curriculum

N = 9

No.	Themes	Interviewees								
		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
1	Identifying reading targets									x
2	Identifying assessment methods and techniques	x								x
3	Outlining strategies for teaching and learning of reading	x								
4	Consider students' interests and attitudes.	x		x	x	x	x			
5	Taking into account society's demands and why it teaches reading				x	x	x			
6	Considering the new trends in reading theory and practice as a language skill.			x		x	x			
7	The curriculum should be centralized on freedom especially in choice of texts that students want to read.	x							x	
8	Explain benefits behind reading texts									x
9	Deriving from what has been said		x					x		

In short, Younis touches most of the main RLCD components which are concerned by the present research but one still very critical issue is: reading literacy targets since it is a central issue in designing a curriculum. In other words, targets guide us in choosing reading materials, or identifying which strategies we need to achieve a certain target(s) and above all, to assess against them. Thus, defining reading targets is stressed by Shehata as he explains that

designers should state clear targets to assess against them; identify assessment techniques and perspectives; and make it clear what the profit behind reading or study certain texts (Script 9, Appendix C).

Also, Shehata's quote reveals a very crucial point in RLI which answers the question of 'why' students need to read. Since, explaining the importance of reading to students has many benefits such as: attract their attention to reading, raise their motivation, and above all, make reading as a meaningful activity which can be beneficial for them and help them in their everyday life.

From another perspective, Abu Bakr points out that

designing a curriculum of reading requires considering two critical factors: students' interests, abilities, and differences; and new trends in reading theory and practice (Script 3, Appendix C).

Abu Bakr stresses the need for two issues that should be considered by designers which are:

1. New trends in reading theory and practice (Item 6, Table 6.16). In fact, this is a very broad principle which would cover what is revealed by the theoretical analysis in the present research.

2. Giving special stressing for students' interests, attitudes, differences as revealed in table 6.16 (Item 4)

The latter point is echoed and stressed by Abdelkadr who posits that

we should take into account students' interests and attitudes at secondary school, and what the society needs from them nationally and internationally (Script 4, Appendix C).

In addition to students' interests and attitudes, Abdelkadr indicates a very important issue which is related to the society where students are taught and brought up. The question which arises in this context is: to what extent can reading help students to meet demands imposed by their society? In other words, how can reading be used as a tool for living and how can reading make their lives easier? Above all, how can reading help students to interact positively with and develop their societies? Furthermore, El-Zany sums up what is pointed by Abu Bakr and Abdelkadr when he indicates that

> *there are three basic perspectives to be considered when designing a curriculum*
> *of reading: psychological perspective which concerns with students' interests,*
> *attitude, and backgrounds; social perspective by which they respond to their*
> *society problems and then feel and realise the importance of reading in their*
> *lives; and the nature of reading itself and the aim beyond teaching it e.g.*
> *understanding and developing a vocabulary repertoire (Script 6, Appendix C).*

From a different angle, El-Morsy stresses not only the importance of giving more room and opportunity for students but also engaging them in reading activity as he points out that

> *nothing but freedom. Students should be free to choose reading materials but*
> *teachers should help, guide and get them engaged in reading activity (Script 8,*
> *Appendix C).*

Probing the answer of the last question about any concerns or suggestions that are appropriate or relevant to the interview topics as table 6.17 reflects. Abu Bakr refers to that

> *understanding processes should be developed as complementary not as separate*
> *skills (...) and hence, what research has said about how students learn should be*
> *considered e.g. bringing students' attention is a very crucial step to be taken*
> *when teaching them but research revealed that students can not focus attention*

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more than twenty minutes therefore teachers need to vary their teaching techniques since it is impossible to bring attention all the time following one technique (Script 3, appendix C).

Table 6.17: Summary of themes found in answering question about any relevant issues to the interview topics

N = 9

No.	Themes	Interviewees								
		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
1	Every thing has been covered.	x	x			x		x	x	
2	Considering reading skills and			x						
3	Designing a curriculum of reading should be done by experts and relevant people				x					
4	Encouraging free reading						x			
5	Teaching reading across the curriculum									x

Abdelkadr states that

I urge policy makers to rely on experts in the field when designing curriculum and then we can have curriculum that meets the standards or at least comes in congruence with what experts think what ought to be in terms of targets, content and so on (Script 4, Appendix C).

Awad says that

I wish to stress the importance of free reading. We should encourage students to read in everywhere and to change their attitudes to be reading nation. Students need to change their reading habits and be interested in reading as they love football and newspapers (Script 6, Appendix C).

Shehata indicates that

> *reading should be taught across curriculum through language, sciences, history and so on. Also, library should include groups of books each of which serves a set of targets and suits a certain grade or group of students and then cooperation between teachers and librarians comes into effect to form reading groups in light of pre-defined targets (Script 9, Appendix C).*

Following data analysis, the next chapter discusses and builds on the theoretical analysis and the data analysis in this chapter and relates that to the Egyptian reality and explains implications for RLCD as it will be indicated.

CHAPTER SEVEN: READING LITERACY CURRICULUM DESIGN

7.0 Introduction

This chapter negotiates a proposed reading literacy curriculum design (RLCD) in terms of its scope, framework, and design. This chapter achieves the key aim of the present research since the researcher intends to clarify and outline a reading literacy curriculum design for secondary school students in Egypt. This can be tackled through relating the theoretical analysis of reading literacy theory and practice (the researcher's perspective), to the fieldwork/empirical study (the professionals' and practitioners' perspectives). In other words, this chapter discusses the data provided by the theoretical analysis on the one hand, and the data derived from the questionnaire and the semi-structured interview on the other and relates all of this to the Egyptian context. Figure 7.1 depicts the main issues discussed in this chapter.

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                    ┌─────────────────────────┐
                    │ Reading literacy curriculum │
                    │     design (RLCD)       │
                    └─────────────────────────┘
        ┌───────────────┬───────────┴─────────┬──────────────┐
        ▼               ▼                     ▼              ▼
┌───────────────┐ ┌───────────────┐ ┌─────────────────┐ ┌───────────┐
│ Negotiating the│ │  Defining the │ │  The framework  │ │ The scope │
│    design     │ │     needs     │ │                 │ │           │
└───────────────┘ └───────────────┘ └─────────────────┘ └───────────┘
        │
┌───────────────────────┐ ┌─────────────────┐
│ The theoretical analysis│ │  The fieldwork  │
└───────────────────────┘ └─────────────────┘
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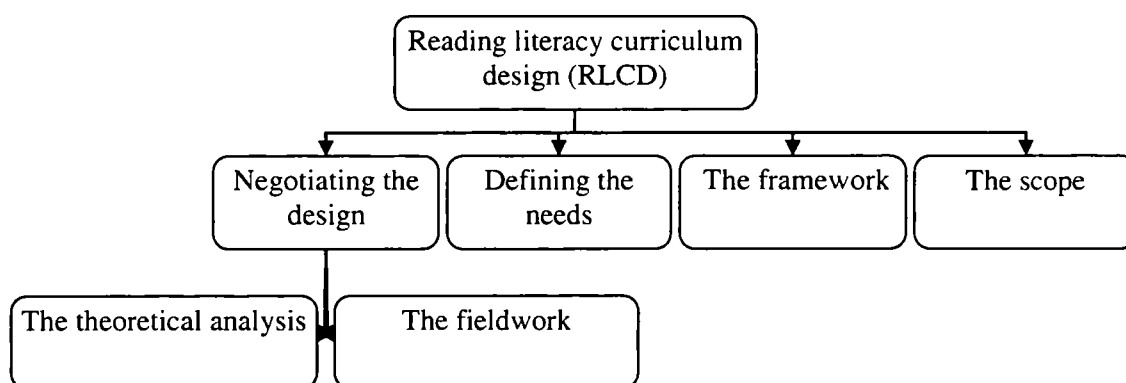
Figure 7.1: Reading literacy curriculum design (RLCD)

7.1 Reading literacy curriculum design: the scope

Before embarking on discussing RLCD, it is useful in this context to clarify some related issues. First of all, what is curriculum? And what is curriculum design? It can be argued that there is an enormous variation in defining curriculum and there is no agreed upon

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definition (Marsh, 1997; Kelly, 2004). It is referred to as: what is taught in school, a set of subjects, content, a set of objectives, what is taught in and out of classroom under school supervision, what student experiences as a result of schooling, or every thing planned by school personnel to enhancing student learning (Marsh, 1997: 3). Thus, Grant (2006) argues that

> *there is no body of evidence which shows that there is one best choice for framing a curriculum as a whole of any of it parts. A curriculum should simply be fit for the purpose and context of its day (p. vii).*

However, it would be useful to refer to a generic definition of curriculum stated by Marsh (1997) to guide the discussion in this context. A curriculum can be portrayed as "an interrelated set of plans and experiences which a student completes under guidance of the school" (p. 5). Any school curriculum, and in turn RLCD, involves four major interrelated components:

1. A plan or planned activities;
2. Experiences or unplanned activities that occur though interaction between teachers and students;
3. The time students need to complete planned activities;
4. Schools as institutions, where all interested parties offer students guidance e.g. teachers, supervisors, or school council.

It can be argued that the idea of planned and unplanned activities draws attention to the distinction between the planned design and the curriculum in action.

> *the actual curricula which are implemented in classrooms consist of an amalgam of plans and experiences, unplanned happenings (Marsh, 1997: 5).*

In this vein, Kelly (2004) states that

it becomes even more important, then, that we should not adopt a definition of curriculum which confines or restricts us to considerations only of that which is planned. What is actually received by pupils must be an equally important or even more important concern (p. 6).

The point to be made in this context is: RLCD provides a broad plan to work accordingly in the secondary school. This plan includes guidelines of what students need (what ought to be) in terms of: reading literacy targets, content, instruction, and assessment. In other words, it gives more opportunity and room to enhance interaction between students, teachers, and texts they read within the classroom context, and this exemplifies the difference between the designed curriculum and actual curriculum referred to above.

The second issue to be made here is: there is a distinction between the scope of design of a curriculum and the curriculum in general. In the field of curriculum, it becomes obvious that the curriculum design is one of the major contributors to and phases of curriculum development.

curriculum is concerned with the planning, implementation, evaluation, management, and administration of educational programmes (Nunan, 2004: 8).

In the same vein,

curriculum is a very general concept which involves consideration of the whole complex of philosophical, social, and administrative factors which contribute to the planning of an educational program (Allen, 1984: 61).

It is worth mentioning that designing a reading literacy curriculum in the present research is limited to and is part of the planning phase. Also, for consistency reasons, curriculum design and syllabus design are used interchangeable. The term 'curriculum design' involves a wide range of activities such as, technical, administrative, or

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instructional perspectives. The syllabus design, on the other hand, has a narrow scope that includes a specification of what should be taught or the content, in the first instance (Johonson, 1982; Widdowson, 1984; Allen, 1984; Yalden, 1984; Nunan, 2004). The idea behind using curriculum design and syllabus design interchangeably is to narrow the gap between what curriculum design involves and what syllabus design entails. This meaning is very akin to and congruent with what is concerned in the present research, which is designing reading literacy curriculum targets, content, instruction, and assessment. This meaning is stressed by Eash (1991) when he points out that

> *curricula consist of five widely agreed upon dimensions or components: (a) a framework of assumptions about the learners and society; (b) aims and objectives; (c) content or subject matter with its selection, scope, and sequence; (d) modes of transaction, for example, methodology and learning environments; and (e) evaluation (p. 67).*

In the same direction, Eash (a1991) explains that syllabus design is a snapshot of and provision of curriculum design.

> *the common framework of a syllabus includes the provisioning of curriculum constructs (...) Once the rationale is explicated, the other constructs of aims and objectives, organization of specific subject matter (scope and sequence), modes of transaction (methodology of instruction), and evaluation are usually provisioned for the user of the syllabus (pp. 71-72).*

Actually, these quotes exemplify the scope of RLCD which is as follows:
1. A framework of assumptions that justify RLCD;
2. The reading literacy targets;
3. The reading literacy content;
4. The reading literacy instruction;
5. The reading literacy assessment.

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In fact, this meaning is clearly stated by Grant (2006) as she points out that

the curriculum design process should ask what are the purposes of an educational programme, how will the programme be organized, what experiences will further these purposes and how can we determine whether the purposes are being attained? (p.vii).

In addition, the preceding quotes indicate that it is very important to justify a curriculum design. In other words, a curriculum rationale is a basic and an initial component to RLCD. A rationale justifies curriculum design by "explicating its reasons, principles, and intents" (Pratt, 1991: 70) Actually, Pratt (1991) argues that curriculum rationale/justification can be divided into three aspects: academic rationalism for the subject matter in question, needs rationalism for students whom the curriculum is intended, context rationalism for decision makers or policy makers in a certain context, and above all, teacher rationalism for teachers who are expected to implement a curriculum. RLCD needs to have a clear and convincing statement explicating why it is important for reading literacy as a subject matter, for secondary students, for teachers, and policy makers. In the same vein, Posner and Rudnitsky (1986) state that

a rationale contains a general statement of educational goals. Conceptions of the learner, the society, and the subject matter from the framework within which the planner articulates these goals. The rationale serves as a guide and check for all later steps in course planning (p. 51).

Turning to writers dealing in particular with language curricula, the same meaning can be inferred from 'points of departures' referred to by Nunan (2004) as he posits that

assumptions about the learner's purposes in undertaking a language course, as well as the syllabus designer's beliefs about the nature of language and learning can have a marked influence on the shape of the syllabus on which the course is based (p. 12).

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Furthermore, Dubin and Olshtain (1986:45) refer to three dimensions of a language curriculum design that are:

1. The content dimension, or texts to be involved;

2. The process dimension, or instruction by which this content is learned;

3. The product dimension or curriculum targets which are expected to be achieved by students.

Similarly, Posner and Rudnitsky (1986) make a distinction between content, process, and product dimensions as they indicate that

the curriculum indicates what is to be learned, the goals indicate why it is to be learned, and instructional plan indicates how to facilitate learning (p. 10).

In addition, Widdowson (1984: 23) states that curriculum design

not only defines what the ends of education through a particular subject ought to be, but it also provides a framework within which the actual process of learning must take place and so represents a device by means of which teachers have to achieve these ends (p. 23).

To sum up this point,

attention to all three dimensions [targets, content, instruction], of course, is vital. However, in the history of language pedagogy shifting views on the nature of language and the nature of language learning have tended to make one or another more prominent (Dubin & Olshtain, 1986: 45).

Each dimension highlights one aspect of RLCD however, when considering the foregoing discussion of the scope and dimensions of RLCD, there is a critical missing point which is concerned with in the present research. This missing point is reading

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literacy assessment as a crucial dimension to RLCD as discussed earlier (See chapter three, reading literacy assessment).

The critical question which arises in this context is: To what extent do these components need to be detailed? Returning to the definition of curriculum stated above as "an interrelated set of plans and experiences which a student completes under guidance of the school" (Marsh, 1997: 5), this definition holds some implications for RLCD. In other words, what characterizes a good design? In this vein, some reject

> *the idea of a fixed plan which imposes objectives, a content, and a teaching methodology upon the teacher who, in turn, imposes this syllabus upon the student (Stern, 1984: 8).*

Therefore, a good design according to this standpoint is "retrospective records rather than prospective plans" (ibid, 1984: 8)

The argument is that curriculum is negotiable, reconstructed, and reinterpreted by teachers and students through classroom interactions. Accordingly, RLCD

> *only makes sense if it is used for the creation of three other syllabuses: the teacher's, the individual student's, and the syllabus of class (Stern, 1984: 8).*

This view of RLCD highlights the role of interaction between teacher and students to construct meaning from text within the classroom context (Ruddell & Unrau, 1994; 2004). In this vein, Breen (1984) argues that

> *any syllabus has to be continually reinterpreted and created by teacher and learners when it is actually used in the classroom (p. 47).*

Eventually, and according to Breen (1984), teachers and students construct their own syllabuses 'the actual process syllabuses' that exemplify a framework for making

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decisions and alternative strategies, and tasks for the classroom group upon ongoing assessment of the appropriateness and effectiveness of those elements. This will

> *guide and serve the explicit interaction in the classroom between any content*
> *syllabus and the various and changing learner syllabuses within the group*
> *(Breen, 1984: 58).*

Thus, Breen (1984: 53) proposes an alternative orientation in curriculum design or what he names as 'the actual process syllabus' in contrast to 'the content syllabus'. In this vein, Candlin (1984) refers to the most salient feature of 'the process syllabus' as it is a productive-oriented rather than prescribed-oriented. Students and teacher negotiate targets, actions to be taken in a dynamic and interactive way, it is retrospective rather than prospective.

It can be argued that this type of design stresses social interactions and negotiations between students and teachers to construct their own designs or meanings of what they are dealing with. In addition, it gets students and teachers more engaged and sharing responsibilities in the instruction process. However, it seems that 'process design' is not in contrast with state's or school's demands for a clear statement in RLCD in order to meet its goals. Also, process designs are not satisfactory for accountability demands.

Thus, in contrast to process-oriented designs, Brumfit (1984), Yalden (1984), and Allen (1984) stress the inevitable need for well detailed designs. In other words, they advocate designs that provide a detailed framework for teaching and learning activities. The argument is that such designs are justified as they are required for 'pragmatic efficiency' or saving time and money and 'pedagogical efficiency' or providing control over learning process in well structured environments (Yalden, 1984: 14). This meaning is stressed by Brumfit (1984: 76) as he posits that

> *not to have a syllabus is to refuse to allow one's assumptions to be scrutinized or*
> *to enable different teachers to relate their work to each other's. It is*

consequently an essential feature of work in a democratic profession or as part of a democratic education (p. 76).

Moreover, Allen (1984) justifies the need for a detailed curriculum design

since language is highly complex and can not be taught all at the same time, successful teaching requires that there should be a selection of material depending on the prior definition of the objectives, proficiency level, and duration of the course. This selection takes place at the syllabus planning stage (p. 65).

From another perspective, 'product designs' are mainly concerned with 'what' unlike the previous view in which 'process designs' are mainly concerned with 'who' and 'how' (Stern, 1984:11). Thus, curriculum design can be classified into two broad categories: centrally-based curriculum design (CBCD), and school-based curriculum design (SBCD). CBCD prescribes what curriculum targets, content, instruction, and assessment, and these prescriptions are centrally initiated and imposed by decision makers in a given state department of education. Whereas, SBCD negotiates what curriculum targets, content, instruction, and assessment by all stakeholders. These elements are internally negotiated by diverse schools, teachers, students, or even parents (Marsh, 1992). Although CBCD promotes uniformity, continuity, control over the curriculum, it limits and minimizes the potential inputs of interested parties e.g. teaches, students, schools, or parents. In contrast, SBCD gets students, teachers, schools more engaged having their own inputs which in turn, makes the curriculum more relevant and responsive to its own context. However, it requires time, expertise, finance, administration, and may conflict with external restrictions (ibid, 1992).

In short, it can be argued that there is a continuum at the one end, highly controlled, centralized, and imposed designs by the state and at the other end, guided and negotiated designs where design is negotiated and control is shared between state/policy makers and people in practice e.g. teachers, school personnel, students, or even parents. In this

sense, RLCD needs to outline broad guidelines that guide the interaction between students, teachers, and text they read within the classroom context. This meaning is stressed by Candlin (1984) who suggests two levels of curriculum design to reconcile between state's demands and the process designs, indicated above, as follows:

1. At one level, the designer is concerned with setting curriculum guidelines for targets, content, assessment, and implementation constraints;

2. At another level, designs or 'tactical accounts' "emerge as joint constructs of teachers and learners, recording of the how, what, and the why" (p. 35).

These productive designs are guided by general curriculum guidelines. In other words, even in process designs, there is a need for guidelines or framework for all interested parties e.g. teachers, students, or school, to work within and accordingly. Widdowson (1984) justifies this reconciliation as he states that

the syllabus can serve as a convenient map. No doubt there are some people who need no such guidance, who can plot their own route without feeling lost, but many, it would appear, need help and can not easily alleviate their own anxiety (p. 25).

With respect to RLCD, Ediger (2003) points out that

it is vital to pay careful attention to designing the reading curriculum. The design provides the framework for the teacher in the instructional arena (...) This structure provides parents, school administrators, pupils the essentials of what to go into a quality reading curriculum (p. 1).

To sum up this point, Lowry (1992) argues that RLCD needs to acknowledge three interplayed and overlapping perspectives: the planned design (the researcher's perspective), the taught design (teacher's perspective), and the learned design (student's perspective).

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Any attempt to change a course needs to take account of all three aspects. Concentrating solely on what you plan to teach may have little impact on what students learn (p. 1411).

The issue here is how can this be tackled? This leads the discussion to the following point, the framework.

7.2 Reading literacy curriculum design: The framework

The key question here is: How can RLCD be framed? It is worth noticing that for consistency purposes, the researcher focuses narrowly on the models that seem to serve directly as a base for RLCD. This is congruent with the scope of curriculum design discussed above. In addition, it is worth reminding that RLCD is limited to and part of curriculum planning phase, and eventually, the terms designing and planning are used interchangeably.

First of all, RLCD is not working alone. In other words, it works within and according to a specific theoretical framework.

Any systematic approach to course planning must be considered within the context of a theoretical framework. At the least such a framework must identify important aspects of the planning process and must show how these aspects are interrelated (Posner & Rudnitsky, 1986: 6-7).

One of the most influential approaches to design is represented by Tyler (1949) who presents a model for curriculum planning, which is considered as a basic one in the field of curriculum development, this model answers and responds to key four questions as follows:

1. What targets to be achieved through curriculum?
2. What learning experiences/content, where these targets can be achieved?
3. How can this content be presented?
4. How can these targets be assessed?

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Elaborating what Tyler indicates, Taba (1962) sets forth seven steps to be considered in curriculum planning: diagnosis of needs; formulation of objectives; selection of content; organisation of content; selection of learning experiences; organisation of learning experiences; and determination of what to evaluate and means of doing it. There are some important and relevant points which arise from Tyler's (1949) and Taba's (1962) models of curriculum design. First of all, Tyler (1949) explains a critical issue that is the curriculum targets are derived from five sources: students' needs; subject specialists; contemporary life; psychology; and philosophy. In other words, when designing a reading literacy curriculum, the researcher needs to consider some key factors that are: students' needs, nature of reading literacy, nature of learning, education context or philosophy and demands of everyday life.

The second point is much related to the first one that is: the first and foremost step to be taken when designing a curriculum is to identify learners' needs. These needs are the base for the curriculum design. In other words, students' needs serve as a base for setting RLCD targets, content, instruction, and assessment (Tyler, 1949; Taba, 1962; Yalden, 1983). The final point to be made here is: it can be argued that Tyler's (1949), and Taba's (1962) models of curriculum design can be viewed as a means-end or prescriptive models that decide on outcomes and locate means to achieve them and consider objectives as a base for next steps e.g. selecting content, instruction strategies, or assessment techniques. In this sense, these models prescribe what teachers and students should follow and hence clearly neglect teachers' and students' input (Walker, 1971; Morrison & Ridley, 1988). This type of framework is consistent with CBCD or 'the content design' referred to above.

In contrast, Walker (1971) explains what he calls the 'naturalistic model' for curriculum design. This model consists of three stages:
1. The 'platform' which exemplifies the designers' beliefs about 'what is' and 'what ought to be'. Designing process is not working in emptiness but the designers hold a certain standpoint(s) to work accordingly;

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2. The 'deliberation' by which the designers justify their decisions and defend certain choices from possible alternatives to be involved in the design;

3. The 'design' which is seen as a series of explicit and implicit defendable and justifiable decisions made by the designer about the blueprint and the plan to work accordingly.

It can be argued that the distinguished point made by Walker (1971) in his naturalistic model is: targets are not the starting point and base for the rest of curriculum elements but they are means, among others, in designing a curriculum. This idea can be inferred from Toohey's (1999: 21) idea of parallel and interlinked steps in curriculum design. It is not a linear process in a sense, it is not created strictly step by step as the designers are free to move back and forth to revise and refine what they have drafted early in light of what they have learned and inspired later. This is stressed by Posner and Rudnitsky (1986) when they indicate that

> *in course design, no steps are ever completed once and for all, Generally, we move to the next step after making a rough approximation because we realize that we will be in a better position to continue our work on an early step with the insights that a later step provides (p. 10).*

Regardless of the standpoint, Yalden (1983), Mathews (1989), Toohey (1999), Spector-Cohen, Kirschner, and Wexler (2001) and Ediger (2003) point out that RLCD has to considering a central issue that is students' needs. The researcher needs to carefully consider four key parallel and interlinked elements as follows:
1. What are the reading literacy targets?
2. How can instruction promote these targets?
3. What the content must be involved and what should be left for students?
4. How can assessment best used?

To sum up, it can be argued that RLCD has to meet students' needs in terms of reading literacy targets, content, instruction, and assessment. The issue which arises here is: all the previous procedures are applicable for many, if not any, curriculum design, and hence, the question is: what makes RLCD in the present research distinguished from others? The answer of this question will be discussed in the following section.

7.3 Reading literacy curriculum design: Defining reading literacy needs

The first stage in RLCD is determining the framework and this framework is regarded as a broad agreement about the approach, targets, instruction, content, and assessment to be used in reading literacy curriculum (Toohey, 1999: 28). This research is concerned with RLCD in the Arabic language for the Egyptian secondary school students. It is intended to produce a framework, a statement, a document, or guidelines that represents the main components of RLCD in responding to secondary students' reading literacy needs. Since, "the justification for a curriculum resides in a human need" (Pratt, 1994: 37).

Generally speaking,

planning is necessary to give language learners a fair chance to succeed in their learning project. Both underestimating and overestimating of language learning are harmful to realistic approaches to language (Huhta, 2002: 10).

In this vein, Cunningsworth (1983) points out that

in order to design appropriate syllabuses and adopt effective teaching techniques, it is necessary to define as accurately as possible the present or future needs of the learners (p. 149).

So,

defining the gaps between the current ends and desired/required ends is a useful
starting place for humane, responsive, and responsible planning (Kaufman and
English, 1979: 32).

Furthermore, Brindly (1989) posits that

one of the fundamental principles underlying learner-centered systems of
language learning is that teaching/learning programmes should be responsive to
learner's needs (p. 63).

It is worth mentioning in this context that there is a large body of research done
regarding students' needs as a base for designing curriculum in English for specific
purposes (ESP) or English as a second language (EFL). The question here is: is there
any difference between identifying needs for designing courses in ESP or EFL and in
general language learning?, as this research is concerned with curriculum design in
general Arabic language or precisely in reading literacy for secondary education in
Egypt. At the same time, sometimes it depends on research that is carried out in the field
of ESP or EFL. Consequently, it should be obvious, from the very beginning, what is the
difference between the context of the present research and others.

In this vein, Hutchinson and Waters (1987: 53) posit that a designing of any language
course "based on perceived need of some sort". The argument is that the difference
between general language courses and courses for specific purposes resides in the extent
of awareness of the need not in the existence of it. This is stressed by Cunningsworth
(1983) as he points out that

there is a world of difference in this context between students learning English
for specific purposes, who are adult and who will use what they learn in the near
future, and a class of secondary school pupils who have no specific purposes in
learning English (beyond perhaps passing an examination which may itself not

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represent any coherent view of why language is being taught and examined (p. 150).

Furthermore, the same point is stressed by Deutch (2003) who indicates that

in general purpose English (GPE) courses have been fraught with difficulties because students' needs are diverse and occasionally even unclear. In contrast, EAP learners form a homogenous group by virtue of sharing the same profession or studying the same subject. Consequently, these learners' needs can be sought in their field of interest and their identified future performance in the target language (p. 125).

RLCD should be based on what students need, and there is a difference between what students need in RLCD in general and what they need in designing ESP or EFL curriculum. The argument is that in RLCD the responsibility of identifying students' needs is carried out by the designer since learners are not likely to know their needs well. Whereas, students in ESP or EFL should be more involved as they might be consulted about what they need and what they want as well. In this vein, Cunningsworth (1983: 150) and (Deutch, 2003: 125) argue that the reason behind this distinction is that in ESP or EFL students are more aware of and more homogenous in their needs than in RLCD. The point that the researcher intends to make is: there is no need to consult students in the present research about what they 'need' in reading literacy curriculum. However, they should be given more room and opportunity to meet and develop what they 'want' or their diverse interests. It follows from the preceding discussion that students' needs:

1. Are crucial prerequisite for RLCD in the Egyptian secondary school.

2. Provide basic information about all components to RLCD dealt with in the present research (i.e. targets, content, instruction, and assessment).

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3. Provide a framework to work within and accordingly for stakeholders: secondary schools, practitioners (teachers and supervisors), policy makers, curriculum developers, students themselves, or even parents.

4. Above all, give the rationale for the proposed RLCD in the present research and make the process of designing more professional.

It is obvious that there is a wide agreement upon the importance of students' needs for planning and designing a curriculum. Therefore, the following section will clarify some important issues about reading literacy needs (RLN) in detail. Before embarking on discussing reading literacy needs, it is useful to clarify what the term 'need' refers to. In this vein, it can be argued that identifying needs has been considered as a base for planning curriculum sine the 1960s (Kaufman & English, 1979; Stufflebeam et al, 1985; McDonough, 1984; Hutchinson & Waters, 1987; McKillip, 1987; Brindley, 1989; Robinson, 1991; Pratt, 1994; Huhta, 2002; Nunan, 2004). It is very critical, in this context, to clarify what 'need' means, and what makes the term 'need' distinct from similar popular terms such a desire, a want, a wish or a demand? This distinction makes us clear in the present research to distinguish between what students 'need' and what they 'want' to learn in the reading literacy curriculum. The researcher is concerned with clarifying what students 'need' as a framework to work within and achieving what they want as well. In this direction, Pratt (1993) points out that

> *the term need (...) requires definition. It is clearly not the same as a desire, or a want, or a demand (...) you may want a cigarette, but we might argue whether you actually need it. Similarly, you may need vitamin D without consciously wanting it (p. 37).*

It follows from that the Egyptian secondary students may need to learn a certain reading for meaning strategy however, they may not be aware of that strategy. What students want, desire, or wish to learn in a reading literacy curriculum is not necessarily what

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they need and vice versa. At this point, Bowers (1980: 72) proposes four situations as far as the learner is concerned:

1. *That in which the learner wants to learn more than he needs to learn.*
2. *That in which the student needs to learn more than he wants to learn.*
3. *That in which the learner neither wants nor needs to learn at all.*
4. *That in which the student's wants and needs are closely matched (quoted in McDonough, 1984: 36).*

The question arises in this context is: what the term 'need' means? And how can students' needs be identified? It can be argued that there are many different definitions or precisely different perspectives of the term 'need', and these different definitions or perspectives, in turn, result in different approaches to identifying needs. In this vein, Stufflebeam (1977) refers to four different views of need as follows:

1. The discrepancy view, where need is a discrepancy between desired performance and observed or predicted performance.

2. The democratic view, where need is a change desired by a majority of some reference group.

3. The analytic view, where need is the direction in which improvement can be predicted to occur, given information about current status.

4. The diagnostic view, where need is something whose absence or deficiency proves harmful. (quoted in Stufflebeam et al, 1985: 6-7)

In the same vein, McKillip (1987) refers to three ways of identifying needs: discrepancy, marketing, and decision making. The discrepancy view values experts' views of what ought to be or more precisely what they think 'what ought to be' in reading literacy curriculum. Marketing view highlights students' opinions whereas, the decision making view is concerned with policy makers or curriculum developers, the decision makers. It is worth mentioning that there is no clear agreement on the concept of needs in language

teaching and this is stressed by Richterich (1987: 2) as he states "the very concept of language needs has never been clearly defined and remains at best ambiguous"

The critical issue is: what type of needs is needed is the present research? And why? It can be argued that the researcher adapts the discrepancy view, and the reasons are the discrepancy view of need meets the demands of stakeholders in the sense that it provides a clear description of and statement about 'what ought to be' in reading literacy curriculum. This in turn, satisfies the demands of assessment and accountability required by state department of education (ministry of education), schools, teachers, supervisors, students, or even parents. In addition, it provides only a broad framework for students to work within. In other words, it gives them more room and opportunity to meet and develop their diverse interests. Moreover, it gives suggestions to policy makers and curriculum developers. Above all, the researcher intends to clarify professionals' views (language curriculum and instruction specialists) and practitioners' (teachers and supervisors) views about secondary students' needs through using the semi-structured interview and the questionnaire respectively.

The discrepancy view simply portrays need as a gap between 'what is' and 'what ought to be' in reading literacy curriculum (Kaufman & English 1979; Richterich, 1980). A need is

> *a discrepancy between a present and a preferred state. In terms of curriculum, the gap between where the learner is now and where we (or the learner, or some other person) would wish the learner to be constitutes the need. Use of the word 'preferred' indicates that we are defining need in terms of values (Pratt, 1994: 37).*

This draws attention to an important issue that is the role of values in shaping needs. The argument is that needs are value-oriented. In this sense, a need is viewed as a value judgment held by some people to solve a problem they have (McKillip, 1987). The same meaning is stressed by Kaufman and English (1979) as they point out that

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values are orientations toward existing and possible goals and objectives in life;
they are predispositions to act in a given manner in a specified situation.
Education and training occur in a context of values (...) when needs are being
identified, when determinations of 'what is' and 'what should be' are being
delineated, the values of people are part of their behavior (p. 29).

Thus, the researcher intends to clarify the Egyptian practitioners' (teacher and supervisors) and professionals' views about what secondary students' needs. That is very critical for the present research since most of needs revealed by the theoretical analysis are elicited from research which is conducted in a different context shaped by different values. As Kaufman and English (1979) point out that

planning and planners often get accused of ignoring values. We can not even if
we want to, for they are a part of working with people (p. 29).

This refers in the present thesis to the sources (i.e. data provided by the theoretical analysis and that provided by the fieldwork) of negotiating needs for RLCD as will be indicated in the following section.

7.4 Reading literacy curriculum design: Negotiating the design

Negotiating the design is the most important section to the present research since the main aim behind this research is achieved by conducting this section. Negotiating the design depends on data derived from the theoretical analysis (TA) and the empirical study (ES). In other words, this section discusses the findings that have been framed and indicated in the theoretical analysis and the data analysis. The discussion aims at clarifying two issues: what is the relationship between the findings from ES and TA, on the one hand? And on the other, what are the implications of all of this to RLCD for secondary school students in Egypt? It is worth reminding the reader that negotiating RLCD is limited to the scope of curriculum design referred earlier in this chapter. In this sense, it involves four major components: reading literacy targets, assessment,

instruction, and content. It is also worth reminding the reader that this discussion is guided by and in the meantime answers the research question of 'What might the proposed RLCD for secondary school students (14-17 year-old) in Egypt look like? The answer to this main question can be shaped through answering four sub-questions as follows:

1. What should be taught (targets) in reading literacy curriculum for secondary school students in Egypt?
2. What types of texts (content) should be available?
3. How can reading literacy be taught (instruction) in secondary school in Egypt?
4. How can reading literacy be assessed (assessment)?

7.4.1 Negotiating RLCD: The targets

Simply put, reading literacy targets refer to what secondary school students in Egypt, are expected to have by the end of the reading literacy course of study. In this vein, the researcher intends to answer the question of 'what should be taught (targets) in reading literacy curriculum for secondary school students in Egypt? The answer, as mentioned earlier, depends on data derived from TA and ES of reading literacy targets (See chapter three and six, reading literacy targets). First of all, it can be argued that TA reveals that there are five broad critical targets need to be considered by RLCD, these targets are:

1. Reading literacy for meaning;
2. Reading literacy fluency;
3. Strategic reading literacy;
4. Reading literacy engagement;
5. Meta-reading literacy.

As far as reading literacy is pertinent to meaning, then reading without understanding of what is being read is equal very little (Lapp & Flood, 1978; Harris & Sipay, 1980; Duffy & Roehler, 1993; Chapman & King, 2003). In this sense, it is very crucial for secondary students to construct meaning of what they read. This constructing meaning process (Ruddell & Unrau, 1994, 2004), requires them to get involved in three simultaneous processes:

1. Literal meaning processes, where they get text explicit information;

2. Inferential meaning processes, where they construct text implicit information;

3. Reflective meaning processes, where they go beyond text information and construct their own meanings (Duffy & Sherman, 1972; Lapp & Flood, 1978; Harris & Sipay, 1980; Alnaqa & Hafez, 2002; Mullis et al, 2004; NAGB, 2004; Rasslan, 2005; Younis, 2005; Te'eima & El-Shoaibi, 2006).

In addition, it can be argued that students' schemata/prior knowledge is a touchstone element in enhancing constructing meaning process (Smith, 1976; Rumelhart & Norman, 1976; Anderson, 1977, 1994, 2004; Anderson & Others, 1977; Rumelhart, 1976, 1981; Bransford, 1994, 2004). Relating this TA information to professionals' views of what should be taught (targets) and included in RLCD. Analysing data provided by the semi-structured interview shows that all the interviewees (Table 6.4, Item 1, chapter six) prioritize deep understanding e.g. critical reading, as a key and a base target to be involved in RLCD. Moreover, five out of nine interviewees consider deep understanding as the most important reading literacy target (Table 6.5, Item 1, chapter six). The point to be made in this context is developing deep understanding i.e. inferential and reflective processes, does not mean ignoring literal understanding since constructing meaning is a simultaneous process and students use all processes to make sense of what they read at a time (Ruddell & Unrau, 1994, 2004; Rumelhart,1994, 2004).

In practice, teachers' and supervisors' views revealed by the questionnaire (Table 6.3, Chapter six) reflect that those practitioners strongly agree with and support theory or what is revealed by TA and professionals' views. According to ES teachers and supervisors prioritize reading literacy understanding targets with at least more than 80% percent of agreement upon their importance as follows:

1. Using the context clues to understand a text;

2. Retrieving information and ideas from a text;

3. Drawing inferences and extracting meaning beyond the literal;

4. Distinguishing characteristic features of different types of texts;

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5. Interpreting the author's an intended meaning;

6. Appreciating the value of literary texts being read;

7. Benefiting from reading in language use in everyday life;

8. Elaborating the understanding of texts in light of the previous knowledge/schemata;

9. Analyzing critically information in a text e.g. sifting relevant from irrelevant information in a text;

10. Recognising literary texts from different cultures and traditions.

Analysing these targets approved by practitioners (teachers and supervisors) shows that all reading literacy meaning processes are important: literally, inferentially and reflectively. The above list, retrieving information, distinguishing text features, and recognizing literary text from different cultures can be classified as literal processes while, drawing inferences is an inferential process, and all the remaining targets can be seen as reflective processes. In addition, the importance of practitioners' views is that it reveals practitioners' approval of specific detailed processes for constructing meaning from a text. It is worth noting that practitioners' answers to open-ended question (Table 6.6, Appendix C) re-stress what they agree upon as important meaning processes. Moreover, they express their support for deep understanding i.e. critical and creative reading. This is consistent with what is revealed by the professionals' responses in the semi-structured interview as stated above.

To conclude, reading literacy for meaning is a critical broad target for RLCD. This is revealed by TA and supported and approved by the professionals' and practitioners' views as revealed by ES. In addition, professionals and practitioners express themselves in favor of deep or reflective processes rather than literal or inferential ones. However, all processes are important as constructing meaning is a simultaneous process of literal, inferential, and reflective processes. Above all, stressing and prioritizing deep understanding processes indicates a very critical issue that is how to reflect on your own reading and how to benefit from it in everyday life. This is the essence of the reading literacy concept as

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the ability to understand and use those written language forms required by society and/or valued by the individual. (...) Readers can construct meaning from a variety of texts. They read to learn, to participate in communities of readers in school and everyday life, and for enjoyment (Mullis et al, 2004: 3).

From another perspective, constructing meaning process is affected by to what extent students are fluent readers. In other words, reading literacy fluency (RLF) (See chapter three, reading literacy fluency) plays an important role in understanding information stated in a text (White, 1995; Pinnell et al, 1995; ETS, 1995; McKenna & Stahi, 2003; Spooner & others, 2004). RLF, as framed through TA, has three components: automaticity, accuracy, and inflection in oral reading. Thus, RLCD needs to consider these elements as important targets. In this sense, RLCD needs to include four broad targets as follows:

1. Developing students' automaticity or more precisely reading speed or rate for different types of texts;
2. Promoting students' accuracy in understanding what they read;
3. Developing students' inflection and expression in oral reading;
4. Concentrating on meaning as the essence of any reading literacy activity.

In other words, fluency is a means by which understanding can be achieved better. Fluency i.e. speed, accuracy, inflection has been seen as a very crucial target to be considered by RLCD. This is argued by most of the interviewees (Table 6.4, Item 5, Chapter six) and considered by some (Table 6.5, Item 2, Chapter six) as one of the most important targets to be included. Contrasting this to the practitioners' views shows that teachers and supervisors give a rank of more than 95% percent of importance (Table 6.3, Item 7, Chapter six) of fluency as a target to be involved in RLCD. In the meantime, answering the open-ended question reveals (Table 6.6, Appendix C) that some of them state that RLCD needs to develop students' oral reading. In a nutshell, RLCD needs to consider fluency as a critical target to be included and this is revealed by TA and is sustained by professionals' views and is approved by the practitioners in practice.

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In a third vein, students best understand a text when they deal with what they read strategically (See chapter three, strategic reading literacy). In other words, strategic readers are aware of and know how to fit their strategy to the purposes for reading (Braten & Samuelstuen, 2004). Also, they fit their stance or focus their attention according to the type of text being read (Rosenblatt, 1994, 2004; Many, 1994, 2004; Ruddell & Unrau, 1994, 2004). RLCD needs to consider elements of strategic reading as important targets and this includes: raising students' awareness of reading literacy processes, types of texts, purposes for reading literacy, and reading literacy stances. More importantly, how to fit reading strategy and stance to reading purposes, and types of texts being read. The point to be made here is: it can be argued that strategic readers are more capable of constructing meaning from text than less strategic students since they are more aware of reading processes and how to use them strategically, choosing from alternatives, to achieve their purposes or to fit the type of text they read. This in turn, speeds up reading and understanding and saves time and effort. In addition, strategic reading is viewed by five interviewees (Table 6.4., Item 3, Chapter six) as an important target in RLCD. This target got more than 90% percent of an agreement upon its importance as rated by the practitioners (Table 6.3., Item 13, Chapter six) Thus, it is clearly evident that strategic reading literacy needs to be considered as an important target by RLCD.

Fourthly, it can be argued that reading literacy engagement (See chapter three, reading literacy engagement) or attitudes and interests is a basic and necessary target to be considered by RLCD. To get students motivated and involved in reading literacy activity is a vital for constructing meaning process (Harris & Sipay, 1980; Guthrie & Others, 1996; Anderson & Guthrie, 1996; Guthrie & others, 2004). In contrast, students, who are demotivated for reading or are not interested in reading, are unlikely to construct proper understanding of what they read. Thus, TA stresses that RLCD needs to consider and raise students' motivation for reading by:

1. Developing general attitudes to reading and why students read and why reading literacy is important and relevant to students' lives.

2. Developing different interests in reading and how to meet different individuals' reading interests.

3. Raising internal/intrinsic motivation over external/extrinsic motivation for reading.

What is revealed by TA is supported by the practitioners' views who agree upon the importance of reading literacy attitudes and interests with more than 88% percent (Table 6.3, Items 14, 15, Chapter six) Secondary students need to display positive interests in free and independent reading and display positive attitudes to reading. Also, they stress the same view in answering the open-ended question (Table 6.6, Appendix C) Moreover, all professionals (Table 6.4, Item 7, Chapter six) stress and prioritize developing students' attitudes to and interests in reading as a critical broad target to be included in RLCD.

Another very important target is meta-reading. In other words, students' awareness and ability to monitor and self-regulate their reading plays a crucial role in improving constructing meaning process (Fitzgerald, 1983; Standiford, 1984; Duffy & Roehler, 1993; Nicholson, 1999). RLCD needs to consider the following sub-targets:
1. Raising students' awareness of what reading literacy is: its concept, purposes, and processes;
2. How to use this awareness in planning to read;
3. How to detect blockages to meaning and how to resolve them;
4. How to assess their reading against their purposes or certain criteria.

Looking at the practitioners' responses (Table 6.3, Items 9, 11, 17, Chapter six) reveals that they agree upon the importance of using meta-reading strategies in self-planning, self-monitoring of reading literacy as follows:
1. Using strategies to resolve blockages to meaning e.g. rereading a certain piece of text or consulting other references;

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2. Using strategies to monitor one's own understanding of a text e.g. clarifying and referencing to one's purposes for reading;

3. Using anticipating meaning strategies e.g. making predictions before and while reading about the further development of a text.

In the same vein, the professionals' views (Table 6.4, Item 2, Chapter six) indicate that five out of nine stress the necessity of considering meta-reading strategies by RLCD as a main target. To conclude, RLCD needs to consider meta-reading strategies as a broad target and this is revealed by TA and supported by the practitioners' and the professionals' views.

It is worth mentioning that chapter one, context of the research, shows that the actual targets for the reading curriculum for secondary school students in Egypt are mainly concerned with enhancing vocabularies, acquiring some language structures, literal understanding, or recalling factual information stated in a text (Ministry of Education, 2002, 2006; Younis, 2005). In this sense, there is a list of critical missing reading literacy targets such as, reflective understanding, fluency, strategic reading, reading literacy attitudes and interests, and meta-reading strategies. This shows the extent of the significance of the present research in offering a proposed RLCD.

7.4.2 Negotiating RLCD: Reading literacy assessment

As indicated earlier in this chapter, assessment has been seen as one of the major components of RLCD. Also, it is worth mentioning that the scope of assessment in the present research is students' reading literacy. In other words, it is about assessment for reading literacy and assessment of reading literacy. The discussion in this section contributes to the answer of the research sub-question of 'How can reading literacy be assessed (assessment)?' In this vein, TA reveals three broad issues regarding reading literacy assessment (See chapter three, reading literacy assessment): a framework for

reading literacy assessment (FRLA); why reading literacy assessment; and how to conduct reading literacy assessment (RLA).

With respect to the first issue, FRLA, the strategic view of RLA advocated in the present research is shaped by the following characteristics:

1. It is reflective, in this sense it is conducted against reading literacy targets or attributes (Valencia & Pearson. 1986). This in turn, reflects a sound reading literacy model adapted in the present research (Ruddell & Unrau, 1994, 2004). RLA needs to consider and be conducted for and/or against five broad reading literacy targets: understanding; fluency; strategic reading, attitudes and interests; and meta-reading strategies;

2. It is compatible. In other words, it is flexible to choose from alternatives assessment strategies or methods to fit and achieve a certain purpose;

3. It is interactive. In other words, it is an integral part of every day instruction within the classroom context. In this sense, it is a continuous and formative process. In addition, it is stressing involvement of students as self-assessors; and sharing assessment criteria between teachers, students, or even parents;

4. It is authentic, in the sense that it uses a variety of strategies to assess students while they are reading authentic texts for genuine purpose. Also, it needs to be conducted in different situations;

5. It is informative. In other words, it provides information to be used by all interested parties e.g. teachers, students, or school. This information can be used in informing instruction, promoting students learning, or grading and determining success;

6. It is motivational. Through feeding back students about their reading, assessment can develop students' self-efficacy; improving the potentiality or the capacity for

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reading by knowing how to improve reading; and then raising motivation to reading.

Consulting the professionals' views (Table 6.9, Chapter six) shows that they are in a way support FRLA which is revealed by TA. In this context, it is useful to re-state the themes elicited from the interview scripts as the interviewees refer to these themes with different emphases. These themes can be stated from the most frequent to less frequent as follows:

1. Using formative assessment;
2. Assessing against the curriculum targets;
3. Using a variety of strategies, methods or techniques;
4. Concentrating on deep understanding;
5. Using free-content texts that have not been seen by students during the course of study
6. Using self-assessment;
7. Considering observations done by teachers in the classroom as part of assessment.

It can be argued that the first theme, formative assessment, can be related to the idea of interactive assessment which is referred to by FRLA discussed above. Since the interactive assessment is part of instruction in the classroom and this involves using formative assessment to inform instruction and help students to improve their reading. In addition, the second theme is clearly related to the idea of reflective assessment and this supports the notion that RLA needs to consider and reflect reading literacy curriculum targets. Moreover, the third issue, using a variety of strategies, can be linked to the principle of authentic assessment since authenticity requires employing a variety of strategies to capture a clear picture about students' reading in different situations. In the same direction, the fifth theme, using free-content text, can be linked to authentic assessment where students read texts for real purposes. In addition, assessment needs to use texts that are not used during the course of study especially in summative or formal exams.

It can be argued that the fourth theme, concentrating on deep understanding, can be categorized under the idea of reflective assessment like the second theme, assessing against curriculum targets. But there is a point to be made here, that is the professionals stress on considering deep understanding in RLA and this implies two points. Firstly, this shows the consistency between their views about considering deep understanding as a reading literacy target and as a main concern of assessment (Table 6.11, Item 1, Appendix C) In addition, it implies that the current assessment is less concerned with deep understanding (Younis, 2005). Moreover, the sixth theme, using self-assessment, is very important to get students involved in assessment processes and sharing assessment criteria and reflect on their reading. This in turn, helps both teachers and students to know where students are at and how to attain their purpose and improve their reading and above all, raises their motivation for reading (Vollands & others, 1996; Wold, 2000). This can be related to the idea of interactive assessment where students get engaged in the assessment process. Also, the seventh theme, observations done by teachers, can be clearly linked to the idea of interactive and authentic assessment as teachers get some important observations about students' reading practices within the classroom context in different situations.

Relating all of this to practitioners' views (Table 6.7, Chapter six) reveals that they agree upon the importance of the following issues regarding RLA with at least 75% percent. RLA should:

1. Examine reading literacy fluency i.e. speed, accuracy, and inflection;
2. Use oral activity in reading assessment e.g. oral reading, and oral retelling or conversations;
3. Be used during the course of study to plan and revise the next stages of the course.
4. Involve different types of texts;
5. Examine attitudes to reading;
6. Consider self-assessment as an important method in reading assessment;

7. Consider observations made by teachers in reading assessment e.g. observation lists or notes;

8. Consider written activity by students as a critical method in reading assessment e.g. reporting a book, and summarizing an article;

9. Consider formative assessment for reading as complementary to the summative assessment of reading;

10. Examine reading interests in reading;

11. Consider listening activity by students as an important method in reading assessment e.g. answering questions after listening to a text/passage;

12. Use standardized tests as a useful method for testing of reading;

13. Assess students on individual bases;

14. Examine strategic reading i.e. fitting reading strategies to reading purposes.

15. Share assessment criteria with students;

16. Examine deep understanding;

17. Use texts which are NOT shown to students during the course of study;

18. Use portfolios, collections of evidence about student's reading practices, in reading assessment;

19. Use Computer-based tests as a useful method in reading assessment;

20. Share assessment criteria with parents.

Looking at these principles shows that items (1, 5, 10, 14, 16) can be related to the idea of reflective assessment since these items indicate that the practitioners agree that RLA needs to examine and be conducted against reading literacy targets (fluency, attitudes and interests, strategic reading, and understanding). This reveals the consistency between what is pointed out by TA, professionals' views and practitioners' views. In addition, considering items (2, 6, 7, 8, 11, 12, 18, 19) shows that RLA needs to use a variety of strategies in holding a clear picture about students' reading literacy. Also, this issue can be linked to the idea of authentic assessment by which the actual reading literacy performance can be reflected in different situations and from different perspectives. In the same direction, are items (4, 17) explain that RLA needs to use different types of texts and moreover, free-content texts in assessment.

Furthermore, deliberating item (3) explains that the practitioners stress the importance of the informativeness of and interactiveness of RLA. In this sense, assessment can be used to inform instruction and to improve reading. This is clearly congruent with the idea of informative and interactive assessment that is revealed by TA. In the same vein, item (9) refers to the importance of using formative assessment as complementary to summative one. In other words, to reflect an authenticity of students' performance, RLA needs to consider this performance throughout different situations.

Items (6, 15) express the practitioners' agreement upon the importance of getting students involved in assessing themselves and sharing assessment criteria with teachers. Again this can be linked to the idea of interactive assessment which is revealed by TA as indicated above. Relating to this point, item (20) refers to the importance of getting parents acquainted with assessment criteria which helps them to assist their children to improve their reading literacy. However, this item got the lowest percent of agreement on the questionnaire and is not referred to by the professionals. A plausible explanation is that many Egyptian parents are illiterate and in this sense, it equals very little to get them involved and share assessment criteria with them. Still a very critical point that is revealed by item (13) which refers to assessing students on individual bases. The argument is that the essence of RLA is informing about every student's needs even though not each student needs to receive every assessment (McKenna & Stahl, 2003: 2). In other words, RLA is meant to help individual students to improve their reading literacy.

In addition, the practitioners' responses to the open-ended question (Table 6.8, Appendix C) reveal that they re-state the importance of what they rated. They re-state:
1. Concentrating on assessing students' interests, and deep understanding;
2. Using self-assessment;
3. Using a variety of methods;
4. Using formative assessment on daily and weekly bases;

5. Using free-content texts which have not been seen by students during the course of study.

6. Also, some of them state that every thing has been covered on the questionnaire (Table 6.8, Appendix C) and this explains that their answer to open-ended question is to re-stress the importance of what they rated.

The question arises in this context is: Why RLA? In other words, what is the concern of RLA in this research? It can be argued that the initial concern of RLA is to inform instruction, understand individual students' reading strengths and weaknesses raise students' motivation for reading and then, raise students' potentiality to improve their reading. This meaning is stressed by Wintle and Harrison (1999), Wragg (2001), Sangster and Overall (2006), and ARG (2006). However, the idea of strategic assessment, advocated in the present research, is meant to fit assessment strategy to assessment purpose. Thus, in addition to the initial concern, RLA can be used for grading, determining success, accountability or even for passing and sharing information to parents about their children's reading (Wintle & Harrison, 1999; Wragg, 2001).

This can be linked to the idea of informative assessment which is revealed by TA. In addition, it is related to the idea of compatible assessment. Also, it can be related, in a way, to interactive assessment discussed above. Furthermore, this can be inferred from the professionals' views about using formative assessment (Table 6.8, Appendix C) Also, it can be inferred from the practitioners' views regarding using assessment during the course of study to plan/revise the next stages of the course and using formative assessment on daily and weekly bases. (Table 6.7, Item 3, 9, Chapter six) The point to be made here is: RLA should be used, initially, for informing instruction and helping students to improve their reading literacy in terms of understanding, fluency, strategic reading, motivation for reading, and awareness of and self-control of their reading.

Another important point to be made in this context is: 'How to conduct RLA?' The rule of thumb to be considered in this context is: RLA is a strategic. In other words, it is meant to fit its strategy to the purpose. The main purpose here is to improve the five

reading literacy targets advocated in the present research: understanding, fluency, strategic reading, attitudes and interests, and meta-reading strategies. Thus, there is a repertoire of assessment strategies or alternatives that an assessor purposefully chooses from these alternatives in order to achieve the purpose in question. Consulting the professionals' views (Table 6.9, Item 4, Chapter six) shows that they in a way support this idea by using a variety of strategies, methods or techniques in assessing reading literacy. For example, an assessor may use 'portfolios', collections of evidence of students' reading practices in different situations at a point of time e.g. teachers' observations or notes, checklists, or reading logs (Valencia, 1990; Johns & VanLeirsburg, 1990, 1991; Sparapani & others, 1997; Tierney & other, 1998). Relating this to practitioners' views (Table 6.7., Item 18, Chapter six) reveals that they agree upon the importance of the use of portfolios, as collections of evidence about student's reading practices.

7.4.3 Negotiating RLCD: Reading literacy instruction

In this section, the researcher intends to answer the research sub-question of: 'How can reading literacy be taught (instruction) in secondary school in Egypt?' Answering this question can be shaped through relating TA to the professionals' views on the one hand, and the practitioners' views on the other. In this vein, TA reflects three major issues regarding reading literacy instruction (RLI) as follows:

1. Students' approaches to reading literacy;
2. Teachers' approaches to teaching of reading literacy;
3. Strategies for reading literacy instruction for the secondary schools in Egypt.

With respect to the first issue, students' approaches to reading literacy which are revealed by TA. It can be argued that students approach reading literacy in three different ways (Marton & Säljö, 1976; Entwistle, Hanley & Hounsell, 1979; Ramsden, 2003; Petty, 2004) as follows:

1. Deep or understanding approach to reading, where students are internally motivated to understand a text in a reflective and an organised way.

2. Surface or reproducing approach to reading, where students intend to get some unrelated chunks of explicit and factual information stated in a text to satisfy external demands.

3. Strategic or achieving approach to reading, where students fit their strategy to the purpose for reading.

In addition, students' strategic approach to reading literacy can be shaped through interaction between three factors: students' orientation towards reading task, reading task demands, and students' perception of teaching (Laurillard, 1979). Students' approaches to reading hold some implications for RLI, chief among them:

1. The essence of any reading literacy is understanding and constructing meaning from texts by which students perceive reading task as a constructing meaning process;

2. Developing a strategic approach to reading, where students fit their orientation to reading according to the purpose for reading;

3. Encouraging intrinsic motivation over extrinsic motivation by which students are deeply engaged in reading activity. In other words, helping students to take a certain orientation towards reading.

4. Adapting teaching strategies that encourage students' involvement and deep understanding e.g. reciprocal teaching, cooperative learning, or problem-solving.

The professionals' views (Table 6.11, Items 1, 7, 9, 10, 11, Chapter six) support the previous principles regarding students' approaches to reading literacy.They stress that teaching needs to concentrate on developing deep understanding, and employ teaching strategies that get students more involved in reading activity such as brainstorming, and problem-solving, and to help students to relate what they know to what they read. In this sense, teaching encourages students to deep reading by affecting their orientation, and

perception of reading task and teaching as well. However, this does not mean that a surface approach or the idea of recall and memorization is completely rejected, it may be helpful and needed e.g. preparing for exams. In addition, the practitioners' views (Table 6.10, Items 2, 6, 9, Chapter six) sustain the importance of the same idea, developing deep understanding and moreover, developing positive attitudes to and interests in reading which raises students intrinsic motivation for reading. This affects students approach to reading through affecting their orientation, and perception of teaching and reading task.

Probing the second issue, approaches to teaching reading literacy, which exemplifies the other facet of RLI? The argument is that in contrast with the student's approaches to reading, there is the teacher's approaches to teaching (Entwistle, Hanley & Hounsell, 1979: 377). In this sense, one approach to teaching may encourage deep understanding and another approach may promote surface reading. In addition, a third approach may develop a strategic reading. TA reveals that there are two main approaches to teaching: instructor approach and facilitator approach. The former is concerned with conveying unquestionable knowledge to passive learners whereas, the latter is preoccupied by helping students how to learn, how to be more productive, and more responsible for their learning (See chapter four, teachers' approaches to reading).

The question which arises in this context is: what is an effective approach to teaching reading literacy? There is no rule of thumb or a clear cut point to describe what effective teaching or teacher is (Borich, 1996; Arends, 1994). However, as argued by Arends (1994), there are four critical issues to be considered to make an approach to teaching reading an effective as follows:

1. Effective teachers have a general knowledge of the principles of teaching;

2. They have a repertoire of strategies regarding various aspects of their teaching in and out of school;

3. They know how to relate their general knowledge and use their strategies in their own context in a reflective way;

4. Above all, they are life-long learners regarding the development of their teaching in theory and in practice.

In addition, and according to Biggs (2003), effective teaching employs strategies that raise deep understanding. What is referred to by Biggs is stressed by the professionals (Table 6.11, Items 1, 4, Chapter six) who explain that RLI needs to emphasize autonomous learning and deep understanding. The same point is referred to by the practitioners (Table 6.12, Appendix C) in answering the open-ended question. Moreover, effective teaching requires professional teachers who can choose from alternatives and justify their choices referring to a theoretical background. This meaning is stressed by the professionals (Table 6.11., Item 13, Chapter six) who state that the most important thing in RLI is the professional teachers, and also, they add that those teachers can choose from alternatives strategies before, during, and after reading activity to help their students (Table 6.11, Item 2, Chapter six). This point can be related to the practitioners' views (Table 6.10, Item 3, Chapter six) who stress the importance of teachers' modelling to students how to use reading to improve their language use in their everyday life.

The point to be made here is: what are the implications of approaches to learning and approaches to teaching for RLI in the secondary schools in Egypt? This refers to discuss the third issue stated above, strategies for reading literacy instruction. The argument is that learning and teaching are two facets of the same coin/instruction, as students and teachers interact with each other to construct meaning from texts they read within the classroom context (Ruddell & Unrau, 1994, 2004; Wray, 2004). In other words, any reading literacy instruction strategy involves students, teachers, and texts within the classroom context (See chapter four, strategies for reading literacy instruction). In this sense, RLI, on the one hand, needs to consider four interactive components: teachers, students, texts, and classroom context. On the other hand, it needs to address five main

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targets in the present research: understanding, fluency, strategic reading, motivation for reading, and meta-reading.

This can be linked to the professionals' views (Table 6. 11, Items 1, 3, 6, Chapter six) who state that RLI needs to address and develop understanding, fluency, and meta-comprehension. The same point is agreed upon by the practitioners (Table 6.10, Items, 2, 5, 6, 8, 9, 10, 13, 14, Chapter six) who stress the importance of targets to be addressed by RLI, chief among them:

1. Developing positive attitudes to and interests in reading;

2. Boosting effective strategies for extending meaning e.g. judging or developing acquired information by writing a short story or an essay;

3. Promoting reading fluency, understanding, and strategic reading;

4. Promoting effective strategies for constructing meaning e.g. clarifying, self-questioning and creating mental pictures of text structures;

5. Developing effective strategies for anticipating meaning e.g. previewing and surveying, setting a purpose, searching for clues, activating prior knowledge, and making predictions.

In addition, the practitioners (Table 6.12, Appendix C) re-stress the importance of the some targets to be considered by RLI such as, developing critical reading, promoting strategic reading, developing oral reading skills, using reading in their language use in everyday life, and using libraries.

The idea of using a variety of strategies by RLI is clearly supported by the professionals (Table 6.11, Items 1, 9, 10, 11, Chapter six) who state that RLI needs to combine a variety of strategies. Furthermore, it can be inferred, in a way, from their stressing that RLI should challenge students thinking by using instructional strategies such as,

problem-solving, brainstorming, and by concentrating on deep understanding. In practice, looking at the practitioners' views (Table 6.10., Item 1, Chapter six) shows they agree upon the importance of variation in teaching strategies and this can be inferred from relating RLI to the other language forms i.e. listening, speaking, and writing. This offers students the opportunity to respond in a variety of ways.

In addition, RLI needs to highlight the role of mental activity and social interaction in reading (Vygotsky, 1978; Piaget & Inhelder, 2000; Pritchard, 2005). In other words, it can be argued that reading literacy is viewed as a cognitive, an interactive, a social and a situated process (Wray & Lewis, 1997). In this sense, RLI needs to consider some issues, chief among them:

1. Helping students to relate their prior knowledge/schemata to new information stated in a text; and creating opportunities for deep understanding to construct meaning from a text rather than memorising and recalling factual information (Smith, 1976; Steffensen, Joad-Dev, & Anderson, 1979; Rumelhart, 1976, 1981; Anderson & Pearson, 1984; Bransford, 1994, 2004; Anderson, 1994, 2004).

2. Securing opportunities for interaction within classroom context between teachers, students, or among students themselves (Ruddell & Unrau, 1994, 2004; Wray, 2004).

3. Securing meaningful and authentic reading tasks and activities by which students are likely to be engaged and participate actively in their learning and realising the significance of reading literacy in their lives (Ausubel, 1963: 22; McFarlane, 1997: XI).

Similarly, the professionals (Table 6.11., Chapter six) refer to some themes that emphasize mental activity and interactions in RLI. In this direction they explain that RLI needs to:

1. Concentrate on developing deep understanding;
2. Emphasize cooperative learning;

3. Use students' schemata/prior knowledge in improving their reading;

4. Use problem-solving strategy;

5. Use brainstorming strategy;

6. Use reading interactive activities;

7. Use reciprocal teaching.

Comparing this to what is rated by the practitioners (Table 6.10, Items 4, 9, 11, 12, 13, 14, Chapter six) emphasizes the importance of reading literacy as a cognitive, an interactive, and a social and a situated process. This can be inferred from items such as:

1. Creating interactive opportunities between and among teacher, text, and students e.g. peer interactions, and teacher-student dialogue.

2. Concentrating on developing deep understanding/intensive reading of texts.

3. Building literate reading contexts within and outside school e.g. seeking parents' support for their children's learning.

From another perspective, RLI needs to highlight the role of students' attitudes, interests, and motivation for reading literacy (Guthrie, 2008a, 2008b; McKenna and Stahi, 2003; McKenna and others, 1995; McKenna, 1986; Harris and Sipay, 1980; Maslo, 1943). In this sense, RLI needs to consider some issues, chief among them,

1. Encouraging students' motivation and engagement in reading literacy activity;

2. Considering students' attitudes to reading;

3. Considering students' interests in reading;

Relating this to the practitioners' views (Table 6.10, Items 2, 6, Chapter six) reveals that they agree upon the importance of developing positive attitudes to reading and improving positive interests in reading.

In addition, Rogers (1983: 20) and Rogers and Freiberg (1994: 36) advocates significant, meaningful, or experiential learning and he explains that such learning involves not only the total engagement of the learner affectively and cognitively but also

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self-initiated involvement. In addition, it involves learners' self-assessment against their needs and targets. This type of learning results in a change learners' behavior, attitudes, or personality. Above all, the essence of this learning is meaning and significance for learners.

7.4.4 Negotiating RLCD: The content

This section is concerned with discussing the last component of RLCD, the content. The researcher intends to answer the research sub-question of: 'What types of texts (content) should be available through RLCD? TA shows some critical points to be considered in negotiating the content as a component of RLCD, these are:

1. What counts as text?
2. Features of texts to be involved.
3. The significance of text for reading literacy.
4. Choosing reading texts.

It can be argued that a text is meant to communicate a message. This can be in oral, printed/written, or pictorial/visual, and each means has two interplayed dimensions; oral (speaking and listening), printed (writing and reading), and pictorial (viewing and representing) (ESCR, 1998; Wade & Moje, 2000: 610). It is worth mentioning that the present research is concerned with written texts as the most important, frequent, and classic type of text used in teaching and learning of reading literacy. This is consistent with the concept of reading literacy advocated as

the ability to understand and use those written language forms required by society and/or valued by the individual (Mullis et al, 2004: 3).

However, students need to read and familiarize themselves with visual/pictorial texts; graphs, tables, charts, and maps and this type of texts can be considered as a sort of printed texts.

The question which arises in this context is: what types of written texts are to be included in RLCD? In other words, what characterizes these written texts (See chapter four, reading literacy content). In this vein, written texts should be varied in terms of:

1. The language e.g. vocabulary, style, or different aids they are revealed with.

2. The organizational design they are connected with e.g. listing, story map, or cause and effect.

3. The purposes they serve e.g. inform, or entertain.

4. The medium e.g. book, story, newspaper article, instructions, report, or internet material.

5. The topic e.g. health, literature, or social sciences.

In this sense, RLCD needs to offer students a variety of texts and this can be as a suggested list of texts that guides schools, students, and teachers in choosing reading literacy materials. The point to be made in this context is: this suggested list should involve different types of texts accordingly with the five principles stated above: language, design, purpose, medium, and topic. Relating what is revealed by TA to the professionals' views shows that most of them support the idea of the 'free-content' (Table 6.9., Item 1, Chapter six). In other words, teachers and students are free to decide upon the reading literacy materials or the types of texts to be read according to the purpose. This requires professional teachers (Table 6.9, Item 4, Chapter six) who have a theoretical background to justify and fit their choices to the purpose for reading. However, some of them (Table 6.9, Item 2, Chapter six) agree with the idea of the need for including different types of texts 'a range of texts' which is stressed by TA. The same meaning is stressed by the practitioners (Table 6.7, Item 2) who agree upon the importance of involving different types of texts in reading literacy content. In reconciling between the two ideas: free content and a range of texts, RLCD needs to suggest a list of what students need to guide them and their teachers in achieving reading literacy targets.

The critical question which arises in this context is: why this variation in reading materials? Answering this question leads the discussion to include the third issue here,

the significance of text for reading literacy. It can be argued that offering students different types of texts raises their awareness of these texts. By this awareness, students can improve their reading literacy in terms of understanding, strategic reading, fluency, and engagement (See chapter four, the significance of texts to reading literacy). Awareness of different types of texts helps in:

1. Constructing meaning from a text by creating a mental picture of text structure;
2. Strategic reading by fitting their strategy and stance to the type of text being read;
3. Fluency by exposure to different types of texts or different types of languages, designs, , topics, or purpose could improve students fluency;
4. Engagement by offering different types of texts to meet different interests in reading.

Once again this shows how far it is important to offer students different types of texts through RLCD. Hence, it stresses the importance of careful choice of these texts. In addition to the five principles that characterize chosen texts stated above, there are some crucial factors to be considered when choosing reading materials (See chapter four, choosing reading materials), chief among them: reading materials should

5. Reflect the curriculum targets;
6. Be of interest and importance for students;
7. Meet difference among students;
8. Be related to reality and students' everyday life, needs, or experiences (Younis, 2007).

In this vein, the professionals (Table 6.9, Items 3, 5, Chapter six) refer to two principles for choosing reading materials:

1. Considering students' interests and needs;
2. Considering reading targets.

Those two principles revealed by the professionals are consistent with what is explained by TA as stated above. In the same vein, the practitioners (Table 6.7, Item 6, Chapter

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six) who refer to the importance of texts that are chosen by students according to their interests and attitudes. Also, they re-stress the same meaning in their answer to the open-ended question (Table 6.8, Appendix C). Moreover, the practitioners' views show that they (Table 6.7, Chapter six) agree upon the importance of including different types of texts in RLCD and these texts involve:

1. Religious texts e.g. Quranic verses and Hadith texts.

2. Texts from Arabic literary heritage written by major writers.

3. Biographical and autobiographical texts about national and international key figures.

4. Texts which include international concerns and concepts e.g. peace, tolerance, or acceptance of others.

5. Texts that are chosen by students according to their interests and attitudes.

6. Informational texts e.g. descriptive texts and argumentative texts.

7. Media texts e.g. newspapers, magazines, and advertisements.

8. Moving image texts e.g. videos, television, and cinema films.

9. Texts which are non-continuous e.g. lists, instructions, forms, graphs, maps, table, charts, and pictures.

10. Texts from different cultures and traditions written by major writers e.g. literary English texts by Shakespeare or literary Russian texts by Tolstoy, or literary African texts by Senghor or Achebe.

11. ICT-based information/digital texts e.g. online texts, CDs/DVDs materials, or e-books.

Once again, these types of texts approved by the practitioners can be used to make a list of suggested types of texts that guide teachers and students in their choices. In addition, what the practitioners, in their response to the open-ended question, say (Table 6.8, Appendix C) that all types of texts are important and need to be considered by RLCD. Also, their responses can be used also in making such a list referred to above.

Another very important and relevant issue to be discussed in this context that is: what the professionals reveal as a response to two general questions of the semi-structured

interview: what are the essential principles that should be taken into account when designing a reading literacy curriculum in secondary schools? And would you like to add any suggestions do you think appropriate concerning this interview? Regarding the first issue, general principles to be accounted in RLCD. Table 6.16 (Chapter six) shows some principles that reveal the professionals' views in this respect as follows:

1. Identifying reading literacy targets;
2. Identifying assessment methods and techniques of reading literacy;
3. Outlining strategies for teaching and learning of reading literacy;
4. Consider students' interests in and attitudes to reading;
5. Taking into account society's demands and why it teaches reading literacy;
6. Considering the new trends in reading theory and practice;
7. The curriculum should be centralized on freedom specially in choice of texts that students want to read;
8. Explaining benefits behind reading texts.

These principles come in agreement with and support of what is advocated in the present research that is RLCD involves four major components: targets, content, instruction, and assessment. In addition, some of the professionals (Table 6.17, Chapter six) add some relevant points as a response to the last interview question: would you like to add any suggestions do you think appropriate concerning this interview? These issues are:

1. Designing a curriculum of reading should be done by experts and relevant people.
2. Encouraging free reading or reading outside school.

3. Teaching reading literacy across the curriculum.

Depending on data derived from the theoretical analysis and fieldwork, this chapter discussed and explained 'what ought to be' in RLCD in terms of its targets, assessment, instruction, and content. To conclude this chapter with its counterparts the next conclusion comes.

CONCLUSION OF THE RESEARCH

This section concludes the present research. It presents a summary of the research and more importantly provides a summary of the contribution of the research regarding reading literacy curriculum design. This contribution is portrayed through four components of RLCD: its targets, assessment, instruction, and content. In addition, it presents recommendations to be considered based upon the research findings, and refers to some recommendations for further research that could enhance relevant issues regarding RLCD. Finally, it presents a reflection on the research and the researcher.

Summary of the research

With guidance of the research methodology and ethics, the researcher conducted his research and sought to answer its questions. There were two complementary components of the present research: the theoretical analysis and the fieldwork. In the theoretical analysis (TA), the researcher intended to clarify four issues: context of the research; reading literacy theory; reading literacy targets and assessment; and reading literacy instruction and content. In the fieldwork, the researcher intended to clarify two perspectives: professionals' views through the semi-structured interview about designing a reading literacy curriculum for secondary school students, and practitioners' views through the questionnaire. Combining and analysing the data from the TA and the fieldwork resulted in outlining a proposed reading literacy curriculum design (RLCD).

In chapter one, context of the research, the researcher intended to answer the first research question of 'How might the curriculum of reading in secondary school in Egypt reflect new trends in reading theory and practice?' The researcher referred to the education system and the culture of learning in Egypt and how they affected the language curriculum particularly the reading curriculum. The main focus of this chapter was a critical analysis of the reading situation within the Egyptian secondary school, by which a snapshot of the actual curriculum of reading in secondary school and its position in light of new trends in reading theory and practice has been discussed. Also, relevant issues regarding the context have been clarified i.e. a synopsis about Egypt, the Arab

Republic of Egypt, was required since the research was being conducted for secondary school in Egypt. The same briefing was needed about 'Arabic language' as the present research was concerned with reading literacy in Arabic language as a mother tongue in Egypt. Moreover, a summary and implications were extracted.

Following clarifying context of the research, chapter two, three, and four shaped the answer, theoretically, for the second research question (and its sub-questions) of "What might the proposed RLCD for secondary school students (14-17 year-old) in Egypt look like?" In this vein, the second chapter, on reading literacy theory, analyzed and discussed reading literacy in terms of its concepts, perspectives, and models that represented different views of the reading literacy process. The critical point made by this chapter lay in relating and eliciting relevant implications of the concepts, dimensions, and models of reading literacy for designing a reading literacy curriculum in the present research. Thus, it can be argued that this chapter provided a baseline that guided the discussion in chapters three and four.

Accordingly with a baseline provided, chapter three, on reading literacy targets and assessment, clarified, discussed, and analyzed the first two components of reading literacy curriculum design (RLCD): targets and assessment. With respect to the first issue, reading literacy targets, the researcher was concerned with clarifying five targets: reading literacy for meaning and the role of schema theory in constructing the meaning process; reading literacy fluency; strategic reading literacy; reading literacy engagement; and meta-reading literacy. Regarding the second issue, reading literacy assessment, three critical points have been discussed: a theoretical framework for reading literacy assessment; purposes for assessment; and how to conduct it.

In the same vein, chapter four, on reading literacy instruction and content, came to discuss and analyze the other two components of RLCD: instruction and content. Regarding the first issue, reading literacy instruction, four points have been investigated: approaches to reading literacy instruction; students' approaches to reading literacy; teachers' approaches to reading literacy; and strategies for reading literacy instruction

for secondary school students. The important point made in this section was that implications of approaches to learning and teaching to reading literacy instruction for secondary school students in Egypt. In addition, the second issue, content/texts, has been discussed in terms of what counted as texts; features of texts to be involved; choosing these texts; and most importantly why these texts contribute to reading literacy. Above all, this chapter has referred to a variety of texts that can be investigated in making a suggested list to guide school, teachers, and students in their choices.

At this point, TA revealed and discussed four components of RLCD: targets, assessment, instruction, and content. The question was "to what extent this proposed RLCD was applicable and acceptable in the Egyptian context?" The researcher intended to use a semi-structured interview to probe the views of specialists in curriculum and instruction in Egyptian universities. Also, a questionnaire was used to get practitioners' views (Arabic language teachers and supervisors in secondary school in Egypt). This justified the need for chapter five, research methodology, and chapter six, data analysis.

In chapter five, on research methodology, the researcher portrayed and mapped a framework for conducting the present research in terms of its design, procedures, methods, data to be collected, and ethics. Thus, it was concerned with clarifying four broad issues. Firstly, research methods, the semi-structured interview and the questionnaire in terms of their construction, justification, data they provided and piloting and assuring their quality. In addition, the fieldwork where description of population and choosing the sample, conducting the interview, and employing the questionnaire have been explained. Also, it referred to data analysis techniques. Above all, it discussed ethics of the research within which the conduct of the present research is bounded and conducted accordingly.

Returning to the question "to what extent a proposed RLCD was applicable and acceptable in the Egyptian context?", chapter six, on data analysis, came to present, discuss, and interpret data provided by the research methods: the semi-structured interview and the questionnaire. This chapter discussed empirical data provided by

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research methods. In other words, it analyzed the professionals' views and the practitioners' views and more importantly it explained how far their views contributed to answer the research question "what might the proposed RLCD for secondary school students (14-17 year-old) in Egypt look like?"

Thus, chapter seven, on reading literacy curriculum design (RLCD), came to detail and bridge between what was revealed by the TA and the fieldwork. The researcher developed RLCD through combining these two facets of the same coin/RLCD. In other words, this chapter defined RLCD in terms of its scope, framework, and components: targets, assessment, instruction, and content. The critical point made by this chapter was relating theory to practice which raises the practicality of and confidence in the proposed RLCD.

The final section of the thesis is this conclusion, where a brief summary of the main issues has been presented. More importantly, a summary of findings or the contribution of the present research has been presented. In addition, some recommendations and suggestions for further research will be presented. This conclusion refers to what the present research contributes to theoretical and empirical knowledge in reading literacy curriculum design.

Summary of contributions of the research

It is worth reminding the reader that this conclusion is based on the whole research. In other words, it summarizes what is revealed and discussed by the TA, the fieldwork, the data analysis, and the discussion. This section provides the theoretical and practical contributions of the present research to reading literacy curriculum design. Accordingly, conclusions can be made regarding the following issues:

1. The education system in Egypt;
2. The Egyptian culture of learning;
3. The actual curriculum of reading in the secondary school in Egypt;
4. The reading literacy concepts;
5. The reading literacy dimensions;

6. The reading literacy models;

7. The reading literacy targets;

8. The reading literacy assessment;

9. The reading literacy instruction;

10. The reading literacy content;

11. The general relevant issues about a reading literacy curriculum design (RLCD).

With respect to the first issue, the education system in Egypt, it is a highly centralized and controlled by the state department of education, the ministry of education. It has four stages which constitute pre-university education in Egypt. Kindergarten stage (4-5 year-old); primary stage (6-11 year-old); elementary (12-14 year-old); and secondary stage (15-17 year-old). As a result of that centralization, all school must teach the same fixed detailed curriculum of reading for all students around Egypt. The argument was that this kind of fixed detailed curriculum of reading might demotivate students from reading since their interests have not been met. In addition to this, secondary school plays an important role in preparing students either for preparing for higher education or for work and facing the burdens of life (Younis, 2005). Above all, secondary students are more interested in developing their social networks and interpersonal relationships (Antonio & Guthrie, 2008). Thus, reading literacy for secondary school students was the concern of the present research.

The idea of centralism in the Egyptian education system is related to the second issue, the Egyptian culture of learning, and how it affects the curriculum of reading. From the discussion (See chapter one, the Egyptian culture of learning) about the Egyptian culture of learning, it was obvious that the current education policy, curricula, methodologies, and assessment seemed to encourage the 'culture of memory'. Such a culture is concerned with availability/quantity, memorization, rote learning, or surface learning. Such a culture has some implications for the curriculum of reading e.g. a good teacher who conveys indisputable knowledge to their students who consume and memorize unquestionable chunks of knowledge. On the contrary, the present research advocated that there should be an education policy, curricula, methodologies, and assessment that

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develop the culture of creativity. Such a culture is concerned with quality, deep understanding, and meaningful learning. For instance, a good teacher facilitates learning and a good student is deeply motivated to learn and understand.

The third point to be made is: digging deeply in the reading situation revealed some important issues regarding the actual curriculum of reading. This portrayed how far the gap was between 'what is' and 'what ought to be' in the curriculum of reading. Although a special attention was paid to teaching reading in the secondary school in Egypt, the direction of such attention was emphasising the following issues:

1. Reading is viewed as a process of decoding and getting literal meanings of text explicit and factual information;

2. Assigning a specific time for teaching reading;

3. Stressing explicit and factual information and enhancing learning new vocabulary items from a text, as targets for reading curriculum;

4. Advocating the role of teacher as an instructor and the student as a receiver of knowledge;

5. Adopting two fixed textbooks as a content for reading for all students around Egypt;

6. Assessment mainly emphasizes measuring the recall of factual information stated in a text.

The point to be made here is: although there were some attempts to improve reading at the secondary school (e.g. Ministry of Education, 2006), the argument was that the actual practices in reading at the secondary school in Egypt not matching new trends in reading literacy theory and practice. This refers to the fourth point, the reading literacy concept, advocated in the present research. The present research adopted reading literacy as "the ability to understand and use those written language forms required by society and/or valued by the individual" (Mullis et al, 2004: 3), and took the view that

readers can construct meaning from a variety of texts. They read to learn, to participate in communities of readers in school and everyday life, and for enjoyment (ibid: 3)

This definition guided the discussion throughout the present research. Explicit implications were made from this definition such as: the essence of reading literacy is understanding and constructing meaning from texts. Also, it implied that the content of a reading literacy curriculum needs to involve different types of written texts. Above all, reading literacy is viewed as a tool for understanding, learning, enjoyment, and more importantly living and improving students' participation and involvement in social life in their communities.

Digging deeply to understand the reading literacy concept, TA revealed that this concept has several chief dimensions. These dimensions are reflected and borrowed from linguists, cognitive psychologists, socioculturalists, psycholinguists, sociolinguists, or socio-cognitive psychologists. The argument was that, on the one hand, these dimensions enriched the field of reading literacy and broadened its horizon to be seen as perceptual, cognitive, social, situated, and engaged process. In contrast, this multidisciplinary nature of reading literacy indicated the fact that reading literacy is a 'dependent' field that borrows its principles and basics from different disciplines as referred to above. The argument was that reading literacy needs to develop its own concepts, principles, theory, and research. This was claimed by some researchers as a 'pragmatic view' of reading literacy.

Following discussing the reading literacy dimensions, TA showed a very related issue that is different models represented and described the reading literacy process: from bottom-up models, to top-down models, to interactive models. The argument was that each wave of models emphasised a certain aspect of the reading literacy process. For example, bottom-up models highlighted the role of decoding in understanding, and top-down models emphasised the role of understanding and prior knowledge in constructing meaning from text, whereas, interactive models indicated that reading literacy is a

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simultaneous process, where students use all available resources (e.g. prior knowledge, textual information, or context clues) to construct meaning from texts. The present research adopted and advocated an interactive model that was a 'sociocognitive model' presented by Ruddell and Unrau (1994, 2004).

As far as reading literacy targets were concerned, they were referred to as what the secondary school students in Egypt, are expected to have by the end of the reading literacy course of study. The argument was that identifying these targets contributed to answering the research sub-question of "what should be taught (targets) in reading literacy curriculum for secondary school students in Egypt?" This answer was derived from the TA (See chapter three, reading literacy targets) and data analysis of reading literacy targets, the questionnaire and the semi-structured interview (See chapter six, reading literacy targets). In this vein, the TA revealed that there are five broad critical targets that need to be considered by RLCD, these targets are: reading literacy for meaning; reading literacy fluency; strategic reading literacy; reading literacy engagement; and meta-reading literacy. The argument was that under these five broad targets, there were many sub-targets.

The essence of reading literacy is constructing meaning from a text and this process involves:

1. Getting text explicit information;
2. Inferring text implicit information;
3. Reflecting on and going beyond text information;
4. Relating students' schemata/prior knowledge to text information;
5. Raising students' awareness of what reading literacy is: its concept, purposes, and processes;
6. Improving students' self-regulating of reading and how to detect blockages to meaning and how to resolve them;
7. Raising students' awareness of how to assess their reading against their purposes or certain criteria;

8. Developing general attitudes to reading and why students read and why reading literacy is important and relevant to students' life;

9. Developing different interests in reading and how to meet different individuals' interests;

10. Raising internal/intrinsic motivation over external/extrinsic motivation for reading;

11. Developing strategic reading and how to fit reading strategy and stance to the reading purpose and the type of text being read;

12. Developing students' automaticity or more precisely reading speed and rate for different types of texts;

13. Promoting students' accuracy in understanding what they read;

14. Developing students' inflection and expression in oral reading.

In practice, Arabic language teachers and supervisors in the secondary school agreed upon the importance of the view that secondary students need to have the following targets by the end of reading literacy course of study:

1. Using the context clues to understand a text;

2. Retrieving information and ideas from a text;

3. Drawing inferences and extracting meaning beyond the literal;

4. Distinguishing characteristic features of different types of texts;

5. Interpreting the author's intended meaning;

6. Appreciating the value of literary texts being read;

7. Benefiting from reading in language use in everyday life;

8. Elaborating the understanding of texts in the light of previous knowledge (schemata)

9. Analyzing critically information in a text e.g. sifting relevant from irrelevant information in a text.

10. Recognising literary texts from different cultures and traditions

11. Using strategies to resolve blockages to meaning e.g. re-reading a certain piece of text or consulting other references.

12. Using strategies to monitor one's own understanding of a text e.g. clarifying and referencing to one's purposes for reading.

13. Anticipating meaning e.g. making predictions before and while reading about the further development of a text

14. Displaying positive interests in free and independent reading.

15. Displaying positive attitudes to reading

16. Accommodating reading strategies to reading purposes e.g. seeking information, literary experience, or performing a task.

17. Displaying fluency (speed, accuracy, and prosody) in reading of different types of texts.

In addition to what was revealed by TA and agreed upon by teachers and supervisors, analyzing data derived from the semi-structured interview reflected the professionals' views which have been summarized in the following themes:

1. Developing deep understanding;

2. Promoting meta-comprehension strategies;

3. Improving strategic reading;

4. Developing fluency (i.e. speed, accuracy, inflection);

5. Improving independent reading;

6. Developing positive attitudes and interests in reading.

Two points were made in this context. It was stated that professionals prioritized the importance of developing both deep understanding (i.e. critical and creative reading) and positive attitudes and interests in reading. Also, the same point was made by teachers and supervisors who answered the open-ended question at the end of first section on the questionnaire. This was consistent with what was revealed by the TA, as the argument was that the essence of reading literacy is constructing meaning from a text. In addition, chapter one, on context of the research, argued that the actual targets for the reading curriculum for the secondary school students in Egypt were mainly concerned with enhancing vocabulary items, acquiring some language structures, literal understanding, or recall factual information stated in a text (Ministry of Education, 2002, 2006; Younis,

2005). This contributed to the justification of the rationale for RLCD advocated in the present research.

In contributing to answering the research sub-question of "how can reading literacy be assessed (assessment)?" The argument was that the TA showed and discussed three broad issues regarding reading literacy assessment (RLA). These issues were referred to as: a framework for RLA, purposes for RLA, and how to conduct RLA. With respect to the framework for RLA, TA revealed distinctive characteristics of RLA within which interested parties e.g. teachers, or students, could work. This framework portrayed RLA as:

1. RLA is reflective. In this sense, it is being conducted against reading literacy targets, which, in the present research, were: understanding; fluency; strategic reading, attitudes and interests; and meta-reading strategies.

2. It is compatible. In other words, it is meant to fit assessment strategy to assessment purpose.

3. It is interactive. In other words, it is an integral part of every day instruction within the classroom context.

4. It is authentic. This means that it invests a variety of strategies to assess students while they are reading authentic texts for genuine purpose in different situations.

5. It is informative. In other words, it provides information which can be invested in informing instruction, promoting students learning, or grading and success.

6. It is motivational. Information it provides can be used to develop students' self-efficacy; improve the potentiality or the capacity for reading by knowing how to improve reading; and raise motivation for reading.

In addition, the argument was that RLA, initially, should be used to inform instruction and improve students' reading. However, it can be used in grading or determining success, or even for accountability purposes. The point that was made was that RLA is a strategic in its purpose. In other words, it is meant to fit its strategy to the purpose. A special attention and primary concern was paid to use it in inform instruction and promote students' reading literacy. Moreover, another point was made in this context that was: how to conduct RLA? The rule of thumb to be considered in this context was that RLA is a strategic. Thus, there is a repertoire of assessment strategies that an assessor purposefully chooses from to achieve a certain purpose

From another perspective, in practice, practitioners (The sample) agreed upon the importance of the following issues regarding to RLA in the present research, which approved what was revealed by TA:

1. RLA needs to examine reading fluency, attitudes to and interests in reading, strategic reading, and deep understanding.

2. It should use a variety of methods and perspectives such as: oral activity, written activity, listening activity, portfolios, observations, standardized tests, or computer-tests.

3. It should be be used during the course of study to plan/revise the next stages of the course.

4. Students should be engaged through self-assessment.

5. It should consider formative assessment for reading as complementary to the summative assessment of reading.

6. It needs to be conducted on individual bases.

7. It should share assessment criteria with students, or even with parents.

8. For authenticity, it should use texts which are not shown to students during the course of study and also, it should involve different types of texts/.

In addition, themes elicited from the professionals' views revealed the following issues regarding RLA, which supported what was revealed by TA and approved by the practitioners:

1. Formative assessment should be considered.

2. Assessment should be conducted against the curriculum targets

3. Assessment should use a variety of strategies, methods or techniques

4. It needs to examine deep understanding.

5. It needs to use free-content texts that have not been seen by students during the course of study.

6. Students should be part of it by using self-assessment.

Furthermore, in answering the research sub-question of "how can reading literacy be taught (instruction) in the secondary school in Egypt?" TA reflected three major issues regarding reading literacy instruction (RLI) as follows:

1. Students' approaches to reading literacy;

2. Teachers' approaches to teaching of reading literacy;

3. Strategies for reading literacy instruction for the secondary school students in Egypt.

With respect to the first issue, students' approaches to reading literacy, TA argued that students approach reading literacy in three different ways as follows:

1. Deep or understanding approach to reading, where students are internally motivated to understand a text in a reflective, structured, and an organised way.

2. Surface or reproducing approach to reading, where students intend to get some unrelated chunks of explicit and factual information stated in a text to satisfy external demands.

3. Strategic or achieving approach to reading, where students fit their strategy to the purpose from reading.

The argument was to develop a strategic approach to reading, where students fit their orientation to reading accordingly with the purpose for reading; perceive a reading task as a constructing meaning process; and get engaged in the reading activity.

Probing the second issue, approaches to teaching which exemplify the other facet of RLI, TA revealed that in contrast with students' approaches to reading literacy, there were teachers' approaches to teaching. In this sense, one approach to teaching may encourage deep understanding and another approach may promote surface reading. In addition, a third approach may develop strategic reading. The argument was that there was no rule of thumb or a clear cut point to describe what is an effective approach to teaching but there were four critical principles that contribute to an effective approach to teaching: a theory to reflect accordingly, a repertoire of strategies to choose from, a context to be considered, and continuous improvement to teaching in theory and practice.

The last point was made regarding strategies for reading literacy instruction. The argument was that learning and teaching are two facets of the same coin/instruction, as students and teachers interact with each other to construct meaning from texts they read within the classroom context. In other words, reading literacy instruction strategy involves students, teachers, and texts within the classroom context. In this sense, RLI, on the one hand, needs to consider four interactive components: teachers, students, texts, and classroom context. On the other hand, it needs to address five main targets identified in the present research: understanding, fluency, strategic reading, motivation, and meta-reading strategies.

In practice, teachers and supervisors (the sample) expressed themselves in favor of what was revealed by theory as they agreed upon the importance of the following issues regarding RLI:

1. Treating teaching and learning of reading as complementary to other kinds of language use i.e. listening, speaking, and writing.
2. RLI should develop positive attitudes to and interests in reading, strategic reading, deep understanding, and reading literacy fluency.
3. Modeling to students how to use reading to improve their language use in their everyday life

4. Creating interactive opportunities between and among teacher, text, and students e.g. peer interactions, and teacher-student dialogue.

5. Boosting effective strategies for extending meaning e.g. judging or developing acquired information by writing a short story or an essay.

6. Developing extensive reading of different types of texts.

7. Emphasizing 'how' students read a text as well as 'what' they learn from a text

8. Building literate reading contexts within and outside school e.g. seeking parents' support for their children's learning.

9. Promoting effective strategies for constructing meaning e.g. clarifying, self-questioning and creating mental pictures of text structures.

10. Developing effective strategies for anticipating meaning e.g. previewing and surveying, setting a purpose, searching for clues, activating prior knowledge, and making predictions.

In addition, those teachers and supervisors who answered the open-ended question at the end of section three on the questionnaire re-stated the importance of what they rated. Actually, what was revealed by TA and approved by practitioners has also been stressed by the professionals who stated that RLI is:

1. primarily aiming at developing deep understanding, meta-comprehension strategies, or fluency;

2. emphasizing strategies such as, cooperative leaning, reciprocal teaching, solving-problems, or brainstorming;

3. using students' schemata/prior knowledge in improving their reading.

4. using reading interactive activities;

5. emphasizing autonomous-learning/reading strategies;

6. teaching students different techniques to be used before, during and after reading. In other words, how to plan, regulate and assess their reading.

The last point to be made in this conclusion is answering the research sub-question of "what types of texts (content) should be available through this curriculum?" In this vein, TA discussed four issues regarding the content of reading literacy curriculum as follows:

1. It is concerned with written texts as the predominant type of text in teaching and learning of reading literacy.

2. These written texts should be varied in their language, medium, design, topic, and purposes.

3. This variation is significant for reading literacy since it raises students' awareness of different types of texts which in turn helps in: constructing meaning from a text by creating a mental picture of text structure; strategic reading by fitting their strategy and stance to the types of text being read; fluency by exposure to different types of texts or different types of languages, designs, , topics, or purpose which could improve students fluency; and engagement by offering different types of texts to meet different interests in reading.

4. Chosen reading texts need to reflect the curriculum targets; be of interest and importance of students; meet difference among students; and be related to reality and students' every day life, needs, or experiences.

Consulting teachers' and supervisors' views revealed that they agreed upon the importance of the view that reading literacy content should include:
1. Different types of texts.
2. Religious texts e.g. Quranic verses and Hadith texts.
3. Texts from Arabic literary heritage written by major writers.
4. Biographical and autobiographical texts about national and international key figures.
5. Texts which include international concerns and concepts e.g. peace, tolerance, or acceptance of others.
6. Texts that are chosen by students according to their interests and attitudes
7. Informational texts e.g. descriptive texts and argumentative texts.
8. Media texts e.g. newspapers, magazines, and advertisements.
9. Moving image texts e.g. videos, television, and cinema films.

10. Texts which are non-continuous e.g. lists, instructions, forms, graphs, maps, table, charts, and pictures.

11. Texts from different cultures and traditions written by major writers e.g. literary English texts by Shakespeare or literary Russian texts by Tolstoy, or literary African texts by Senghor or Achebe.

12. ICT-based /digital texts e.g. online texts, CDs/DVDs materials, or e-books.

In addition to that, teachers and supervisors who answered the open-ended question at the end of section two on the questionnaire, stated that the content needs to involve: literary texts, religious texts, range of texts i.e. literary and expository, texts which refer to different critical and international topics e.g. peace, autobiography and biography texts, texts chosen by students, informational texts, media text, international literature/texts from different cultures and traditions, non-continuous texts, digital texts, or handwritten texts. Moreover, the semi-structured interview revealed some important themes from the professionals who stated that reading literacy content needs to be free which requires professional teachers who can make decisions in choosing texts to be used. In addition, some of them argued that the content should include a range of texts that would meet students' interests in choosing materials. The argument was that the types of texts revealed here can be used in creating a list of readings to guide interested parties e.g. school, teachers, students, in choosing reading materials.

A further relevant point in this context is the general principles to be accounted for in RLCD, revealed by the professionals as response to general questions at the end of the semi-structured interview. Chief among them were RLCD needs to account for: reading literacy targets, reading literacy instruction, reading literacy assessment, students' interests in and attitudes to reading, society's demands and why it teaches reading literacy. Also, the design needs to consider new trends in reading theory and practice, be centralized on freedom especially in choice of texts that students want to read, be conducted by experts and relevant people, encourage free reading or reading outside school, or teaching reading literacy across the curriculum.

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Recommendations for practice

Stemming from the contribution of the present research, some recommendations can be made:

1. The education system in Egypt needs to be decentralized or, at least, it should take some steps towards this end. This can be reflected, to some extent, in RLCD through accounting for school's, teachers', and students' inputs.

2. The education policy, curricula, methodologies, and assessment need to encourage the 'culture of creativity' which promotes quality, understanding, and meaningful learning. Such a culture discourages memorization, rote learning, and surface learning.

3. The actual reading practices within the Egyptian situation need to be reconsidered in light of new trends in reading literacy theory and practice. The present research is a step towards this end.

4. The view of reading as a set of decoding and comprehension skills needs to be reconsidered. In other words, the concept of 'reading literacy' advocated in the present research, should guide reading practices e.g. targets, content, instruction, or assessment.

5. It has been discussed that reading literacy is a multidisciplinary field that is informed by a range of feeding fields e.g. psychology, linguistics, or sociology which lacks of common language and unsuitable assumptions or methodologies (Dillon et al, 2004: 1537). The argument has been that the field of reading literacy needs to be an independent discipline which has its community of inquiry, own compatible assumptions and methods, and own distinctive scientific common language. This could be achieved by adapting 'pragmatism' as

> *a new stance for academics and communities of inquirers. Pragmatism is not a paradigm adapted from those that are popular; rather, it is a*

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revolutionary break in our thinking and practice relating to inquiry. As a literacy community, we need to challenge ourselves to step back and think collectively and individually about the inquiry in which we are engaged (Dillon et al. 2004: 1554).

6. Reading literacy models summarize and represent what is revealed by theory/research from different dimensions. They visualize reading literacy components and interrelationships among these components. Each wave of models i.e. bottom-up, top-down, or interactive models, represents and emphasizes a certain aspect of reading literacy process e.g. bottom-up models stress the importance of textual information and, top-down models emphasis the role of prior knowledge in construction meaning from text, whereas, interactive models highlight the simultaneousness of reading processes: bottom-up and top-down. The recommendation to be made is that reading literacy practices can use all these models in improving such practices.

7. Policy makers, curriculum developers, or practitioners need to consider reading literacy targets for secondary school students advocated in the present research. Reading literacy curriculum should develop understanding, fluency, strategic reading, motivation, and meta-reading strategies.

8. In addition, reading literacy assessment needs reconsideration in light of what is advocated in the present research. This stresses using assessment for informing instruction and improving students' reading in a strategic way that fits assessment strategy to assessment purpose.

9. In the same direction, reading literacy instruction needs to consider students' approaches to reading, teachers' approaches to teaching, nature and aims of reading literacy itself, and interaction within the classroom context. Thus, all interested parties e.g. practitioners, policy makers, or developers, should plan

reading literacy instruction to consider teachers' and students' inputs and interactions to construct meaning from text within the classroom context.

10. The last recommendation to be made in this context on the content of reading literacy needs to reconsider content in light of what is revealed in the present research. This indicates that this content should involve different types of texts that would meet individual interests.

Recommendations for further research

Stemming from the findings and recommendations of the present research some recommendations are made for further research. The aim is to enhance and enrich reading literacy learning for secondary school students in Egypt. In this vein, further investigation is needed to probe in more detail the culture of learning in Egypt and how it affects teaching and learning of language particularly reading literacy in the secondary education. Moreover, more investigation is required to understand what the secondary students 'want' since it could give suggestions about students' interests for policy makers, curriculum developers, or practitioners in the field. Also, it is important to investigate why practitioners agreed with what was revealed by reading literacy theory and disagreed with the actual curriculum of reading practices. In addition, a theoretical research may be required to explain the core notion of reading literacy as a tool for living or relating reading to students' life. The same theoretical research is needed to suggest a proposal for gradual decentralization of the education system in Egypt especially in designing the curriculum. Above all, further research is required to put the proposed RLCD in the present research in action, on a small scale, and evaluate its effectiveness and suggest improvements.

Reflective epilogue

In this closing section, some reflections on the research and the researcher have been stated. The first and foremost point as I am writing this close is that I did remember when I started this research I had only three main questions to be answered but after I have finished I have more questions that are raised throughout my work on this research.

The point I want to make is this research has widened and strengthened my skills and understanding of doing research, raising new questions, choosing appropriate methodology, collecting and analysing data, and discussing findings in relation to its context, and understanding of their limitations.

In addition, this research has broadened and enriched my understanding of what reading literacy means and how this concept can be translated into practical and concrete guidelines for reading literacy curriculum for the secondary students in terms of its targets, assessment, instruction, and content. For example, I understand that reading literacy targets should include reading for meaning, fluency, strategic reading, reading engagement, and meta-reading. As another example, I understand through my research that the essence of reading literacy is that it is a means for learning, communication, living, or participation in community rather than a set of skills to be acquired for passing exams.

The major contribution of this research is producing a reading literacy curriculum design (RLCD) for the secondary school students in Egypt. Two points were made relating to this contribution. Firstly, this design is limited to broad guidelines and implications for reading literacy targets, assessment, instruction, and content. Secondly, this design, to a great extent, is different from the actual curriculum of reading in the Egyptian secondary school. Thus, the researcher intended to compromise between 'what is' and 'what ought to be' and explained how this design can be used as a stepping-stone towards 'what ought to be' rather than making a revolutionary change in the education system in Egypt.

The key strength of this research is relating theory to practice. In other words, the researcher devised a proposed RLCD based on analyzing reading literacy research. But, to find out whether this RLCD is acceptable or practical for the secondary school students in Egypt, the researcher examined the practitioners' views (i.e. teachers and supervisors) and professionals' views about RLCD. This had two merits: it revealed the acceptability and practicality of the proposed RLCD in the Egyptian context. It also raised the confidence in RLCD by triangulation of data by using the questionnaire for

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the practitioners and the semi-structured interview for the professionals and relating all of this to literature analysis.

Despite the soundness of the methodology used in this research which mixed TA, qualitative, and quantitative techniques, the researcher found he can not answer some questions, for example, the question of why the practitioners expressed themselves in favour of what has been revealed by theory regarding RLCD, which was not consistent with the actual practices where they work. This would require extra investigation.

Another major challenge was analysing data since the researcher had three sources for data: data derived from the literature analysis, data derived from the semi-structured interview, and data derived from the questionnaire. It was not easy since the research methodology can not tell you about every single detail and step to be taken in such cases to bring all these data together in an organised way. Every piece of research has its uniqueness while the methodology is relatively universal. However, this enhanced the researcher's experience in doing such analysis. In addition, one of the challenges was handing out the questionnaire and getting the replies back in person. It was effortful, expensive, and time-consuming.

In conclusion, this research contributed to my skills, knowledge and understanding of doing research especially in a different context and how to communicate with other contexts and find your own way. Also, it changed and enriched my understanding of 'what ought to be' in RLCD. It is also a baseline for curriculum developers, policy makers, teachers, and supervisors in Egypt. It is a critical step towards change in the development of reading literacy curriculum. It introduced the concept of 'reading literacy' to the Egyptian context and above all, how this concept can be operationalized in terms of RLCD and its four components discussed in this research. Finally, it raised many questions and issues that could be used in enhancing reading literacy research especially in the Egyptian context.

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Appendices

Table 1.2: The Arabic alphabet: general Unicode, contextual forms, names, transliteration, and international phonetic value (IPA)

General Unicode	Contextual forms				Name	Translit.	Phonemic value (IPA)
	Isolated	Final	Medial	Initial			
0627 ا	FE8D ا	FE8E ـا	—	—	'alif	' / ā	Various, including /aː/
0628 ب	FE8F ب	FE90 ـب	FE92 ـبـ	FE91 بـ	bā'	b	/b/, also /p/ in some loanwords
062A ت	FE95 ت	FE96 ـت	FE98 ـتـ	FE97 تـ	tā'	t	/t/
062B ث	FE99 ث	FE9A ـث	FE9C ـثـ	FE9B ثـ	ṯā'	ṯ	/θ/
062C ج	FE9D ج	FE9E ـج	FEA0 ـجـ	FE9F جـ	ǧīm	ǧ (also j, g)	[dʒ] / [ʒ] / [g]

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Continuation of table 1.2: The Arabic alphabet: general Unicode, contextual forms, names, transliteration, and international phonetic value (IPA)

General Unicode					Name	Translit.	Phonemic value (IPA)
	isolated	Final	Medial	Initial			
062D	FEA1	FEA2	FEA4	FEA3			
ح	ح	ح	ح	ح	ḥā'	ḥ	/ħ/
062E	FEA5	FEA6	FEA8	FEA7			
خ	خ	خ	خ	خ	ḫā'	ḫ (also kh, x)	/x/
062F	FEA9	FEAA					
د	د	د	—		dāl	d	/d/
0630	FEAB	FEAC					
ذ	ذ	ذ	—		ḏāl	ḏ (also dh, ð)	/ð/

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Continuation of table 1.2: The Arabic alphabet: general Unicode, contextual forms, names, transliteration, and international phonetic value (IPA)

General Unicode	Contextual forms				Name	Translit.	Phonemic value (IPA)
	Isolated	Final	Medial	Initial			
0631 FEAD FEAE ر	ر	ر	—		rā'	r	/r/
0632 FEAF FEB0 ز	ز	ز	—		zāī	z	/z/
0633 FEB1 FEB2 FEB4 FEB3 س	س	س	ـس	ـس	sīn	s	/s/
0634 FEB5 FEB6 FEB8 FEB7 ش	ش	ش	ـش	ـش	šīn	š (also sh)	/ʃ/

Continuation of table 1.2: The Arabic alphabet: general Unicode, contextual forms, names, transliteration, and international phonetic value (IPA)

General Unicode	Contextual forms				Name	Translit.	Phonemic value (IPA)
	Isolated	Final	Medial	Initial			
0635 FEB9 FEBA FEBC FEBB	ص	ص	ص صـ	صـ صـ	ṣād	ṣ	/s□/
0636 FEBD FEBE FEC0 FEBF	ض	ض	ض ضـ	ضـ ضـ	ḍād	ḍ	/d□/
0637 FEC1 FEC2 FEC4 FEC3	ط	ط	ط	ط	ط ṭā'	ṭ	/t□/
0638 FEC5 FEC6 FEC8 FEC7	ظ	ظ	ظ	ظ	ظ ẓā'	ẓ	/ð□/ / /z□/

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Continuation of table 1.2: The Arabic alphabet: general Unicode, contextual forms, names, transliteration, and international phonetic value (IPA)

General Unicode	Contextual forms				Name	Translit.	Phonemic value (IPA)
	Isolated	Final	Medial	Initial			
0639 ع	FEC9 ع	FECA ع	FECC ـعـ	FECB عـ	‘ayn	‘	/ʕ/
063A غ	FECD غ	FECE غ	FED0 ـغـ	FECF غـ	ġayn	ġ (also gh)	/ɣ/ (/g/ in many loanwords)
0641 ف	FED1 ف	FED2 ف	FED4 ـفـ	FED3 فـ	fā’	f	/f/, also /v/ in some loanwords
0642 ق	FED5 ق	FED6 ق	FED8 ـقـ	FED7 قـ	qāf	q	/q/

Continuation of table 1.2: The Arabic alphabet: general Unicode, contextual forms, names, transliteration, and international phonetic value (IPA)

General Unicode	Contextual forms				Name	Translit.	Phonemic value (IPA)
	Isolated	Final	Medial	Initial			
0643	FED9	FEDA	FEDC	FEDB			
ك	ك	ك	ڪ	ڪ	kāf	k	/k/
0644	FEDD	FEDE	FEE0	FEDF			
ل	ل	ل	ل	ل	lām	l	/l/, ([lˤ] in _Allah_ only)
0645	FEE1	FEE2	FEE4	FEE3			
م	م	م	م	م	mīm	m	/m/
0646	FEE5	FEE6	FEE8	FEE7			
ن	ن	ن	ن	ن	nūn	n	/n/

Continuation of table 1.2: The Arabic alphabet: general Unicode, contextual forms, names, transliteration, and international phonetic value (IPA)

General Unicode	Contextual forms				Name	Translit.	Phonemic value (IPA)
	Isolated	Final	Medial	Initial			
0647	FEE9	FEEA	FEEC	FEEB			
	ه	ه	ﻬ	ﻫ	hā'	h	/h/
0648	FEED	FEEE					
	و	و	و	—	wāw	w / ū	/w/ / /uː/, sometimes /u/, /o/ and /oː/ in loanwords
064A	FEF1	FEF2	FEF4	FEF3			
	ي	ي	ﻴ	ﻳ	yā'	y / ī	/j/ / /iː/, sometimes /i/, /eː/ and /e/ in loanwords

From: http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Arabic_alphabet, February 24th, 2009.

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(1) THE QUESTIONNARE

Dear Colleagues

The purpose of this study is to design a reading literacy curriculum for secondary school students in Egypt. Therefore, by answering this questionnaire- which will be complemented by in-depth interviews- you will help the researcher to analyze supervisors' and teachers' views of formulating and designing such a curriculum in terms of, what secondary students should be taught (targets); how it will be taught (instruction); which texts should be available (content); and which assessment criteria and techniques should be used (assessment).

You are warmly invited to spend about twenty minutes to complete this questionnaire by ticking the answer you choose and however, you have the right to add whatever you want by answering the open question at the end of each section. Of course, your answers will be treated with full confidentiality and kept anonymous and the researcher will use the replies only for his research purposes. Your response will be of great value to the study and your co-operation would be highly appreciated. You have the right to withdraw at any time. An example:

To be healthy people need to walk quarter an hour daily	V. imp.	Imp.	L. imp	Not imp.	und eci ded
	√				

Your sincerely

The Researcher

Abdelaziz Mohamed A. Hussien

School of Education

University of Durham

United Kingdom

Section one: reading literacy targets:

No.	By the end of a course of study students should be able to:	V. imp.	Imp.	L. imp.	Not imp.	und eci ded
1	Distinguish characteristic features of different types of texts					
2	Recognize literary texts from different cultures and traditions					
3	Use the context clues to understand a text					
4	Retrieve information from a text					
5	Draw inferences and extract meaning beyond the literal					
6	Interpret author's an intended meaning.					
7	Analyze critically information in a text e.g. sifting relevant from irrelevant information in a text, distinguishing between facts and opinions, bias and objectivity.					
8	Appreciate and develop an understanding of the value of literary texts					
9	Relate one's prior knowledge to text information					
10	Display fluency (i.e. speed, accuracy, expression) in reading of different types of texts					
11	Appreciate how reading will help them with language use: writing, listening and speaking in their everyday life.					
12	Anticipate meaning e.g. making predictions before and while reading about the further development of a text.					
13	Use strategies to monitor one's own understanding of a text e.g. clarifying and referencing to one's purposes from reading the text.					
14	Use strategies to resolve blockages to meaning e.g. rereading a certain piece of text or consulting other references.					
15	Read strategically i.e. fitting reading strategies to purposes for reading e.g. seeking information, literary experience, or performing a task. .					
16	Display positive attitudes to reading					
17	Display positive interests in voluntary and independent reading					
18	Do you think there are other objectives that should be taught? Please specify: 1. 2. 3. 4. 5.					

Section two: reading literacy content:

No.	The content of a course of study in reading literacy should include:	V. imp.	Imp	L. imp.	Not imp.	und eci ded
19	A range of texts e.g. informational or literary texts					
20	Texts from Arabic literary heritage written by major writers					
21	Texts from different cultures and traditions written by major writers e.g. literary English texts by Shakespeare or literary Russian texts by Tolstoy, or literary African texts by Senghor or Achebe					
22	Religious texts e.g. Quranic verses and Hadith texts					
23	Biographical and autobiographical texts from Arabic heritage and cultures.					
24	Informational texts e.g. descriptive texts or argumentative texts					
25	ICT-based information texts/digital texts e.g. online texts, DVD materials, and E-books.					
26	Media texts e.g. newspapers, magazines, and advertisements.					
27	Moving image texts e.g. videos, television, and cinema films.					
28	Texts which are non-continuous e.g. lists, instructions, forms, graphs, maps, table, charts, and pictures.					
29	Texts which are chosen by students					
30	Texts which discuss international issues e.g. peace, or tolerance.					
31	Please list the most five important that should be included in a course on reading literacy: 1. 2. 3. 4. 5.					

Section three: reading literacy instruction:

No.	The following approaches should be a part of every teacher's approach to teaching and learning a course on reading:	V. imp.	Imp	L. imp.	Not imp.	und eci ded
32	Treating teaching and learning of reading as complementary in approaching to language use i.e. listening, speaking, and writing					
33	Building literate reading contexts within and outside school e.g. seeking parents' support for their children's learning					
34	Modeling to students how to use reading to improve their language use in their everyday life					
35	Concentrating on developing deep understanding /intensive reading of texts.					
36	Developing surface reading/extensive reading of texts					
37	Creating interactive opportunities between and among teacher, text, and students e.g. peer interactions, and teacher-student dialogue.					
38	Striking 'how' students read a text as well as 'what' they learn from a text					
39	Developing attitudes to reading					
40	Developing interests to voluntary and independent reading.					
41	Promoting reading fluency i.e. accuracy, automaticity, and prosody.					
42	Developing strategic reading i.e. fitting reading strategy to purpose for reading					
43	Developing effective strategies for anticipating meaning e.g. previewing and surveying, setting a purpose, searching for clues, activating prior knowledge, and making predictions.					
44	Promoting effective strategies for constructing meaning e.g. assessing and revising predications, accessing fix-up strategies, and creating mental pictures of text structures.					
45	Stressing effective strategies extending meaning e.g. judging and developing acquired information by writing a short story or an essay.					
46	What else do you think should be considered in reading literacy instruction in secondary schools? Please specify: 1. 2. 3. 4.					

Section four: reading literacy assessment:

No.	The reading literacy assessment should:	V. imp.	Imp	L. imp.	Not imp.	Un dec ide d
47	Use texts which NOT be shown to students during the course of study.					
48	Involve different types of texts					
49	Assess students on individual bases.					
50	Be used during the course of study to plan/revise the next stages of the course					
51	Consider formative assessment for reading a complementary to the summative assessment of reading.					
52	Examine deep understanding					
53	Examine reading fluency i.e. speed, accuracy, or expression					
54	Examine attitudes to reading					
55	Examine interests in reading					
56	Examine strategic reading. i.e. fitting reading strategy to purposes for reading e.g. seeking information, literary experience, or performing a task					
57	Share assessment criteria with students					
58	Share assessment criteria with parents					
59	Use oral activity in reading assessment e.g. oral reading, and oral retelling.					
60	Consider classroom observations by teachers in reading assessment					
61	Consider self-assessment as part of reading assessment					
62	Use portfolios, collections of evidence about student's reading practices, in reading assessment.					
63	Consider written activity by students in reading assessment e.g. reporting a book, and summarizing an article.					
64	Consider listening activity in reading assessment e.g. answering questions after listening to a text / passage.					
65	Use standardized tests as a useful method for testing of reading comprehension.					
66	Use Computer-based tests as a useful method in reading assessment.					
67	What other methods or considerations should be used in assessing reading for comprehension in secondary schools? Please specify: 1. 2. 3.					

Section five: the respondents' personal information

No.	Personal Information		
1	Name (optional)		
2	School or Institute name		
3	Age-range	a. 20-30 year-old	( )
		b. 30-40 year-old	( )
		c. 40-50 year-old	( )
		d. 50-60 year-old	( )
		e. 60 and more year-old	( )
4	Teaching experience in Arabic language	a. 1-5 year	( )
		b. 5-10 year	( )
		c. 10-15 year	( )
		d. 15-20 year	( )
		e. 20-25 year	( )
		f. 25-30 year	( )
5	School location	a. an inner-city	( )
		b. a suburb area	( )
		c. a rural area	( )
6	Gender	a. a male	( )
		b. a female	( )
7	Position	a. a school teacher	( )
		b. a school supervisor	( )
		c. a university teacher	( )
		d. other, please specify	....
8	Qualification	a. a medium	( )
		b. a university level	( )
		c. a master level	( )
		d. a PhD holder	( )
		e. other, please specify	....

* Approved by Durham University's Ethics Advisory Committee

(2) INTERVIEWEES' CONSENT FORM

Title of project: Designing a reading literacy curriculum for secondary school students in Egypt

Please complete the whole sheet. Delete whatever is not applicable.

1.	Have you read the letter of the introduction to the research?	Yes/No
2.	Have you received enough information about the research?	Yes/No
3.	Have you had an opportunity to ask questions and discuss the	Yes/No
4.	research?	
5.	Have you received satisfactory answers to all your questions?	Yes/No
6.	Who have you spoken to? Mr/Mrs/Ms.	Yes/No
7.	Do you consent to participate in the study?	Yes/No
8.	Do you receive enough information about tape recordings and the intended use?	Yes/No
9.	Do you consent to tape recordings for the desired purpose of the research?	Yes/No
10.	Do you understand that you are totally free to withdraw from the research without any harmful consequences?	Yes/No

Signed .... Date ....

NAME IN BLOCK LETTERS ....

* Approved by Durham University's Ethics Advisory Committee

(3) THE INTERVIEW SCHEDULE

The purpose of this study is to design a reading literacy curriculum for secondary school students in Egypt. Therefore, by conducting this interview- which will be complemented by the questionnaire- the researcher can analyze professionals' views of formulating and designing such a curriculum in terms of, what secondary students should be taught (targets); how it will be taught (instruction); which texts should be available (content); and which assessment criteria and techniques should be used (assessment).

Of course, your answers will be treated with full confidentiality and kept anonymous and the researcher will use the replies only for his research purposes and it will be destroyed by the end of this research. Your response will be of great value to the study and your co-operation would be highly appreciated.

Your sincerely
The Researcher
Abdelaziz Mohamed A. Hussien
School of Education
University of Durham
United Kingdom

Questions

1. **From your experience, what do students need to be taught in a curriculum of reading literacy for secondary school students?**

2. **What do you think is the most important target(s) needs to be taught?**
   - Do they need to be taught text features? And why?
   - Does fluency need to be taught? And why?
   - Does deep understanding need to be taught? And why?
   - Do they need to be taught strategic reading? And why?
   - Do positive attitudes to and interests in reading need to be considered? and why?

3. **What do you think what the content of a course on reading literacy should include?**
   - What types of texts should be used?
   - What the most important types of texts should be used?

4. **In your opinion, which instructional approaches and strategies should be stressed and employed to facilitate teaching and learning of reading literacy in secondary schools?**
   - What are effective teaching and learning strategies?
   - Which are effective startegies for reading literacy in secondary schools?

5. **In your opinion, what should be considered in assessing reading literacy in secondary schools?**
   - What are the purposes of reading literacy assessment?
   - What are effective methods in assessing reading literacy?
   - What should reading assessment involve?
   - Is the formative assessment important? And why?

6. **Generally, what are the essential principles that should be taken into account when designing a reading literacy curriculum in secondary schools?**

7. **Would you like to add any suggestions do you think appropriate concerning this interview?**

Script (1): Professor Y. F.

1. Reading literacy targets

1.1. Secondary stage is a very crucial stage since it prepares students either to join higher education or marketplace and therefore, teaching of reading should enhance thinking skills and positive attitudes toward their societies and others.

1.2. Students should be taught how to read in content areas. It is common in our teaching to depend on literary and general informational reading materials. But, students should be taught to read in sciences, social sciences, or internet materials.

1.3. It is very important to develop critical reading by which students can release irrelevant information in a text, recognise the logic behind evidences being presented in a text, or find something which has not been intended by the author. This helps in developing creative readers.

1.4. Students should be taught how to plan for reading and what they need to do and how to evaluate what they get from reading (...) Therefore, acquainting students with metacognition techniques e.g. prediction, reviewing, summarizing, or evaluation, should be considered in the curriculum of reading.

1.5. Teaching speed reading is a very important skill since the press provides thousands of books and other readable materials. Thus, there is a bad need to teach different techniques for speed reading e.g. how to scan or skim to get accurate gist or main ideas in a text or how students report a summary of what they read accurately since speed with understanding compounds a very critical skill that is 'speed, accurate, and deep reading. Our students need to be taught how to improve their speed reading as research done in this area showed that the Egyptian students are falling in the category of the slowest students around the world in terms of their reading rate.

1.6. It is very important to consider expression as a very important skill since students, sooner or later, face an audience to read or speak to. Therefore, it is

important to read expressively and according to the situation as in drama series, theatre or role playing.

1.7. It is important for students to know characteristic features that make every type of text distinctive in a sense of how to distinguish between expository or narrative structures followed by the authors or how to discriminate between different types of narrative writings e.g. stories, playwrights, and poems since students' creative abilities grow and develop quickly at secondary school and students need to know these structures to develop their creative abilities.

1.8. Reading attitudes and interests can be considered counting on what is revealed by previous research done in this area.

2. Reading literacy content

2.1. Students should be free to read whatever they want and then they provide reports about their readings each week or month. Students need free content in all fields.

3. Reading literacy instruction

1.1. Before embarking on teaching the reading course of study, students should be equipped by different reading strategies.

1.2. Then, students use these strategies and report what they read. Every student needs to report his/her readings which can be reported in student's portfolio also, it is possible to make competitive small reading groups.

1.3. Before reading, students may be asked to write down what they know about texts they are going to reading or to anticipate the development of text. While reading, they may be asked about the logic behind the evidences presented in a text, or literal and inferential understanding. After reading, they can be asked about what they got and how can they apply and benefit from it in their life.

4. Reading literacy assessment

4.1. Assessment should be conducted against pre-defined curriculum targets e.g. speed reading requires a test in speed, reading for study needs a test in reading for study or reading performance requires an oral test and so on.

4.2. Coursework done by students in the classroom during the course of study should get 50% percent of the total assessment degree given to students however, and according to the nature of the Egyptian society 20% or 25% percent would be fine. Also, formative assessment helps especially in corrective reading. Also, formative assessment helps especially in corrective reading.

5. General principles of designing a reading literacy curriculum

5.1. All what should be considered when designing a curriculum is: identifying reading strategies, open/free content, specifying assessment techniques, and guide students to read what they are interested in according to previous research done in this field.

Script (2): Professor T. R.

1. Reading literacy targets

1.1. First of all, I would like to refer you to an important document that you may find it useful that is: 'The National Curriculum Guide for Arabic Language' presented by the ministry of education (2006) since this guide parades to reading targets and strategies (how to teach it) at the basic (primary and elementary) and the secondary schools in Egypt.

1.2. Reading involves four levels: recognition; understanding; criticism/judging; and interaction and the latter means that students' ability to benefit from or apply acquired information in their lives.

1.3. Fluency means that students can read independently without any help and this is the most passionate target behind teaching reading. Fluency is concerned with developing students' ability for self-learning/reading and dealing with texts without help as Chinese proverb says: 'if you give me a fish you feed me for a day but if you teach me fishing then you feed me for all my life'.

1.4. Reading in the content areas i.e. mathematics needs reading skills which differs from what sciences requires and both of them differ from reading literature or history and so on. Each type of text requires some reading skills that students should have.

1.5. With respect to an understanding of a text, there are three levels of such understanding: reading lines; reading between lines; and reading beyond lines. Reading lines by which students get explicit information stated in a text; reading between lines whereby students make inferences beyond literal meaning; and reading beyond lines by which students can use acquired information in their life. However, I strongly support reading beyond lines since I am advocate of deep reading that I hope to teach our secondary students.

1.6. Choosing reading content should be in congruence with students' interests since it is difficult for students to learn what they do not like. However, how can we consider all students' interests while they are varied and different? (...) Therefore, we need to adhere to general interests that have been revealed by

previous research done in this area especially in Egypt as this exemplifies a common ground of interest between students.

2. Reading literacy content

2.1. No matter whatever type of text students read (...) but what really matters are skills that students acquire. The issue is how students read texts rather than the content of text they use. Current age is concerned with skilled people not with content itself.

3. Reading literacy instruction

3.1. There is no best or superior teaching method in reading since each method has its own goals and audience but professional teachers are the touchstone of choosing effective method(s).

4. The Reading assessment

3.1. Assessment should be conducted against reading targets. Assessment should be comprehensive and exhaustive for all stated reading targets not cognitive targets only. Also, it should be continuous before, while, and after reading. Above all, it should involve assessing students' performance through performance/oral test.

5. General principles of designing a reading literacy curriculum

The most important thing to be identified is reading targets. If the designers specify reading targets accurately then you can say that half of the curriculum has been done.

Script (3): Dr. A. A.

1. Reading literacy targets

1.1. Broadly speaking, reading targets should be consistent with reading concept. In other words, reading is not only word sight but also understanding, criticism, or judgment whatever texts being read. Eventually, reading targets should involve analyzing, predicting, judging, or making connections among ideas in a text.

1.2. Reading is not only to criticise texts being read or judge or appreciate these texts but also to create since reading is not a passive action or receiving information stated by the authors. Reading can be a productive e.g. students can be given a story and asked to make different ends for it (...) Reading targets should include developing students' ability to predict, criticise, analyze, appreciate, judge, evaluate texts being read, and above all to create.

1.3. Also, meta-cognition strategies are very important targets to be taught. In addition, reading attitudes, interests, free and extensive reading should be of interest of the reading curriculum. Moreover, reading fluency and speed reading are very important targets as well.

1.4. Teaching text structure can be classified under reading understanding since by knowing the structure followed by the author helps students to understand ideas in a text. Also, each type of text has its own structure such as a story, a poem, or an essay and teaching such these structures is an important key for reading understanding.

1.5. The most important targets to be taught are: understanding, analyzing information in a text, appreciating the value of literary texts, benefiting from reading in solving problems, or creating/producing new ideas.

2. Reading literacy content

2.1. Achieving targets of teaching reading requires involving different types of texts i.e. all literary texts e.g. pomes, stories or even essays and informational texts, or texts related to students culture and environment. In addition, texts that help students to bridge communication with their societies and world (...) Moreover,

students need to read religious texts (...) and newspapers, magazines and internet/digital texts.

3. Reading literacy instruction

3.1. Our teaching should be in congruence with what research has said about how students learn and how learning happens (...) In this context, teacher can use strategies such as problem solving, cooperative learning, constructive learning, reciprocal teaching, or mapping.

4. Reading literacy assessment

4.1. We assess students in their ability of deep understanding and to be convinced that those students can analyze critically, appreciate, judge, or even create, or perform fluent oral reading. Thus, we need different type of questions to be asked e.g. oral or written, objective or subjective. Also, students can be assessed using different methods e.g. e-mails, portfolios, or observations lists. Assessment should vary its methods and techniques to make sure of measuring different perspectives of students' learning.

5. General principles of designing a reading literacy curriculum

5.1. Designing a curriculum of reading requires considering two critical factors: students' interests, abilities, and differences; and new trends in reading theory and practice.

6. Suggestions and relevant issues

6.1. Understanding processes should be developed as complementary not as separate set of skills (...) and hence, what research has said about how students learn should be considered especially brain-based research e.g. bringing students' attention is a very crucial step to be taken when teaching them but research revealed that students can not focus attention more than twenty minutes therefore teachers need to vary their teaching techniques since it is impossible to bring attention all the time following one technique.

Script (4): Dr. A. F.

1. Reading literacy targets

1.1. It is obvious until now, in the Egyptian schools, that there is no clear reading targets allocated to each stage, primary, elementary, or secondary stage. The secondary school still teaching word recognition skills and literal understanding while these skills are concerned in the primary stage.

1.2. Reading targets in the secondary school should be concerned with free and extensive, critical, appreciative, creative reading or deep understanding rather than literal one. Also, speed reading and reading orally and expressively need to be considered.

1.3. Curriculum designers should adapt a 'psychological curriculum' which starts from and considers students' attitudes and interests in reading that are derived from and identified by previous research. In this way, we can develop or choose reading materials which meet students' attitudes and interests and make teaching and learning of reading meaningful otherwise students read superficially without deep understanding.

1.4. Speed is a very important however, speed should be accompanied by understanding. In other words, reading speedily with an understanding of what is being read.

1.5. The most important target that should be taught is expression in oral reading since improving that encourages the listener to listen and interact with the reader/speaker which in turn gives the reader self-satisfaction about his or her reading performance.

2. Reading literacy content

2.1. As we are ambitious to achieve reading targets at secondary school, the content should meet and suit these targets. It is difficult to achieve these targets through one textbook imposed on students but the content should be varied and involve many books in different disciplines even the same book should include different types of texts e.g. literary or informational.

3. Reading literacy instruction

3.1. Teaching reading at secondary school should be concerned with learning for reading rather than teaching of reading. In a sense that students should be respond positively and interact not only with their teachers but also with each other and with texts they read.

4. Reading literacy assessment

4.1. Assessment should concentrate on deep understanding and adapt variant methods oral or written, objective or subjective.

5. General principles of designing a reading literacy curriculum

5.1. We should take into account students' interests and attitudes at secondary school, and what the society needs from them nationally and internationally.

6. Suggestions and relevant issues

6.1. I urge policy makers to rely on experts in the field when designing curriculum and then we can have curriculum that meets the standards or at least comes in congruence with what experts think what ought to be in terms of targets, content and so on.

Script (5): Dr. Z. M.

1. Reading literacy targets

1.1. A reading curriculum should develop appreciative and creative reading. Literal understanding is supposed to be developed during the elementary school. But, secondary school should be concerned with critical and creative reading e.g. adding something new or sifting facts from opinions.

1.2. Attitudes and interests play a critical role in reading. There are many studies which are concerned with identifying secondary students' interests. In this era, we could use the computer in specifying such interests and attitudes instead of traditional methods e.g. paper questionnaire. For example, we can monitor students (a sample) and know which type of topics they prefer and are interested in. This could be very helpful in matching students' interests in reading.

1.3. Also, secondary school should be concerned with strategic reading, reading fluency, text structure but critical and creative reading have the priority over other targets.

2. Reading literacy content

1.2. The current content is very limited. I advocate that students choose different materials to read according to their attitudes and interests in reading. Above all, I urge designers to make an e-book/digital book that can be loaded to the internet and has web of links that refer students and give them access to whatever topic or type of text they want.

2.2. Religious texts are the most important type of texts to be involved and then social, cultural, or political texts. Also, texts written by major writers should be included.

3. Reading literacy instruction

3.1 There is a matching method or strategy for each type of reading. Instruction can use brainstorming, or use techniques that help students to relate their prior knowledge to text information. Whatever instruction strategy it should be meant to fit the purpose for reading.

4. Reading literacy assessment

4.1. Assessment should be conducted against stated targets in the curriculum. It needs to use various methods such as: tests, performance or oral tests, or interviews

4.2. Formative assessment helps students, on the one hand, to be familiar with taking exams and, on the other hand, to assess themselves and find out what they have achieved and what still needs to be accomplished.

5. General principles of designing a reading literacy curriculum

5.1. There are three basic perspectives to be considered when designing a curriculum of reading: psychological perspective which concerns with students' interests, attitude, and backgrounds; social perspective by which they respond to their society problems and then feel and realise the importance of reading in their lives; and the nature of reading itself and the aim beyond teaching it e.g. understanding and developing a vocabularies repertoire.

Script (6): Professor A. F.

1. Reading literacy targets

1.1. In light of new trends in teaching and learning of reading, reading understanding involves seven levels as follows: literal; interpretive; deductive; inductive; critical; appreciative; and creative understanding. These seven levels should be taught for secondary students.

1.2. Although the importance of affective perspective, it is not concerned with in the actual curriculum of reading.

1.3. Fluency is very important. In Egypt we still do not know secondary students' rates in reading. The point to be made in this context is reading rate/speed has two perspectives: speed and understanding. Speed without understanding equals very little.

1.4. Strategic reading is very important as well. The point to be made is all cognitive, affective, and skilful perspectives should be considered when stating reading targets.

2. Reading literacy content

2.1. The content should meet students' interests and suit targets behind teaching of reading. It should balance between what students want and what they need to learn. In addition, designers should consider norms of quality of texts being presented e.g. variation to satisfy differences among students in their interests, intelligences, cultures or personalities.

3. Reading literacy instruction

3.1. It is very important to offer interactive activities before, while, and after reading in addition, some extra activities for free reading. Also, it is important to consider meta-cognitive processes.

4. Reading literacy assessment

3.1. Students should be involved in assessment. Also, assessment should concentrate on deep understanding i.e. criticism, interaction, creativity, and productivity.

3.2. Assessment should be consistent with targets and the general assessment standards e.g. comprehensiveness and variation. Also, it should consider the nature of reading itself where it measures different levels of understanding and different perspectives i.e. cognitive, affective and skills.

5. General principles of designing a reading literacy curriculum

5.1.When designing a reading literacy curriculum, there elements should be considered: students' interests, attitudes and needs; nature of reading literacy itself; and society's values and demands.

6. Suggestions and relevant issues

6.1 I wish to stress the importance of free reading. We should encourage students to read in everywhere and to change their attitudes to be reading nation. Students need to change their reading habits and be interested in reading as they love football and newspapers.

Script (7): Dr. Z. A.

1. Reading literacy targets

1.1. Fluency is improving very rapidly at secondary school if reading materials are different and varied and if students have interest in reading. In addition, if students have automatic recognition skills.(...) This variation and desire in reading lead not only to speed but also to understanding as well and this speed with understanding make students more experienced and fluent readers. There are different speeds for reading e.g. skimming to get the gist of a text or scanning to get main ideas or reading for study and this depends on 'strategic readers' who know and identify their purposes from reading (...) Unfortunately, rapid reading is so limited in Arab world since we teach students to read only to pass exams and hence, our students are not fluent as a result of poor experiences and attitudes to reading.

1.2. Secondary school needs to concentrate on two issues: variation in reading or reading in content areas and develop independent reading or at least achieve gradual independence from teachers. Students should recognise, choose, criticise, or judge reading materials. In other words, using reading as a tool for not only receiving but also for understanding, living and communication. Also, it is critical to develop critical reading, where students can cope with such life full of paradoxical ideas. Secondary school should qualify students to deal with different reading situations and different types of texts. It should qualify students either to use reading to improve their life or to continue their education in higher institutes. Therefore, it is very important for secondary school to develop both intensive and extensive reading and prioritize critical reading.

1.3. Strategic readers know and identify their purposes for reading and this strategic reading develops as a result of, on the one hand, extensive reading and, on the other hand, variation in reading purposes.

1.4. Secondary students' attitudes and interests in reading are extension and reflection of what students have as a result of their experience in primary and perp. school. I mean these attitudes and interests are supposed to be developed positively in primary and perp. school and then secondary school builds on and enriches that attitudes and interests. The point to be made in this context is the family is the starting point in

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developing such positive attitudes and interests. This highlights the role of family literacy in doing so. Unfortunately, in Arab countries reading is taught only inside schools for passing exams, success and grading. This demotivates students to reading and justifies our failure to develop positive attitudes to and interests in reading.

1.5. The most important target for reading literacy is to contribute to improve students' lives through benefit from reading in their language use in everyday life and to cope with life's demands through reading in different situations and different types of texts.

2. Reading literacy content

2.1. It is very important when teaching reading that professional teachers guide their students to choose suitable materials. Therefore, imposing a certain textbook for reading and assess students at the middle or end of the course in its content is not acceptable any more from my point of view. Instead, students should use classroom, school, public or even home libraries that presumably include different types of texts in different fields.

3. Reading literacy instruction

3.1. Teachers are the touchstone of teaching reading. I mean, professional teachers, who know philosophical and theoretical bases that underpin their choices. Then, no matter which strategy is being used but what really matter are those teachers who are aware of what they choose however, they may adopt different techniques such as metacognitive strategies or problem solving or discovery or discussion or even brainstorming technique.

4. Reading literacy assessment

4.1.The proposed assessment will be different from the current assessment. In other words, assessment needs to depend on free-content texts on the one hand and it should concentrate on meaning processes/how students read rather than the

content itself. Those are two major issues need to be considered in reading assessment.

Script (8): Professor M. M.

1. Reading literacy targets

1.1. The most important target for the curriculum of reading at the secondary stage or any stage is developing 'thinking readers' since, students nowadays have to choose form alternatives which makes teaching thinking skills a compulsory target (…) therefore, I urge to call reading session thinking session through reading.

1.2. Students should have motivation for reading. You can take your horse to a river but you can not force it to drink water. Likewise, students they may come to reading session but you can not force them to read. Thus, students should have interest in reading and know why they read and what their purposes from reading are. In this case, they read purposefully and deeply to achieve their purposes otherwise they may read but with their fingers and eyes not minds.

1.3. Certainly, reading has two types according to its form: silent and oral, and it has many types according to its purpose e.g. reading for study or reading to perform a task or reading for recreation and so on. Teachers should be concerned with all these types and all of these types may be practised in one session e.g. reading session may be concerned with reading for study and passing an exam and reading orally a piece of poem for recreation.

1.4. Fluency involves speed and accuracy and accuracy includes reading with expression and fluency in this meaning is very important.

1.5. The most important targets that should be included developing thinking and deep understanding in addition, reading performance.

2. Reading literacy content

2.1. The content is not important in itself but what is really important is that using this content as a starting point for developing deep understanding. However, this requires professional teachers as a critical factor in doing so.

3. Reading literacy instruction

3.1. It is very important to promote self-learning where students before reading can choose the text they want to read (...) and identify some questions to be answered through reading (...) and after reading they can apply acquired information to serve language use e.g. writing an essay.

4. Reading literacy assessment

4.1. Assessing oral reading counts on reading performance i.e. speed, accuracy, articulation, expression, and considering punctuation. Whereas, assessing silent reading depends on measuring deep understanding e.g. making inferences behind lines, criticising, appreciating texts being read. Also, if students can give a summary of what they read or retell orally or give a comment on what they read would be effective in assessing reading (...) The overall aim of assessment is to give students confidence in their abilities to understand what and why they read and above all, to apply or benefit from their reading in their lives not getting information only.

5. General principles of designing a reading literacy curriculum

5.1. Nothing but freedom. Students should be free to choose reading materials but teachers should help, guide and get them engaged in reading activity.

Script (9): Professor S. H.

1. Reading literacy targets

1.1. Teaching of reading at secondary schools requires group of aims i.e. some of them related to understanding a text; analyzing a text critically and express one's opinions about it, sifting opinions from facts, getting evidences; and creative reading and how apply the information you get from reading or how to add or to interpret a text in different way. It should be related to the ideas and cultural context rather than linguistic perspective.

1.2. Students should have rich and variant vocabularies repertoire in addition, speed reading which depends on.

1.3. Reading interests grow throughout primary school and then transfer into attitudes. Secondary school should boost positive attitude toward one's nation, others, and the whole universe since all human being share some global issues despite of they are different in their language, culture, religion, and tradition. Therefore, secondary school should develop positive attitudes toward the other as an idea or religion or race or homeland. And how to deal positively and effectively with the environment, social involvement, democracy, responsibility, freedom....etc. we should care about students emotionally and affectively as this guides them in what they accept or refuse and hence help them in their making decisions and making right and positive choices.

1.4. All readers should have a clear vision which helps them know what, why and how they read and what tactics that help them to reach their purposes from reading. In addition, he or she knows his or her motivation and purpose of reading.

1.5. Teaching text structure is very important since equipping students with characteristics feature of different types of texts e.g. pomes, stories, playwrights helps students to understand, make connections and relationship and interpret ideas in a text.

1.6. The reader should be critical, interactive with a text, creative and productive.

1.7. Students should be taught to think about what they think/read i.e. before reading they should identify questions/goals that to be answered/achieved through

reading and know how, when, and where they read. While reading they should know how to modify their thinking and reading behaviour and after reading how they evaluate and judge their reading in light of pre-defined objectives.

1.8. Each student needs to have his or her own reading vision and knows his or her purposes for reading. When starting reading, student should know why s/he reads and what suitable and applicable strategies that help her or him to achieve her or his reading purposes.

1.9. We should develop positive attitudes at secondary school. Students, through reading, need to display positive attitudes to the other as an idea or a culture or a race or a society (...) since all these positive attitudes help students to be developed affectively and have a database and background to make their own decisions/choices.

2. Reading literacy content

2.1. The content should include informational, technological, social, economic, or religious texts (...) It should be varied as many as variation in different fields.

3. Reading literacy instruction

3.1 Students can work in small groups inside the classroom to discuss different ideas. Reading session should be session for dialogue, discussion, and brainstorming. Variation and multiplicity should be the attribute of reading instruction and the aim behind this is to develop deep and divergent thinking and hence make each student has his or her own vision and thought.

3.2 In general, teachers can identify the type of text to be read, guide students to library, and advise students to read about one idea from different resources.

4. Reading literacy assessment

4.1. Assessment has tow perspectives: self-assessment and assessing text in terms of its content, characteristic features, and significance to students.

5. General principles of designing a reading literacy curriculum

5.1. Designers should state clear targets to assess against them; identify assessment techniques and perspectives; and make it clear what the profit behind reading or study certain texts.

6. Suggestions and relevant issues

6.1. Reading should be taught across curriculum through language, sciences, history and so on. Also, library should include groups of books each of which serves a set of targets and suits a certain grade or group of students and then cooperation between teachers and librarians comes into effect to form reading groups in light of pre-defined targets.

Table 6.1: Sex, age, experience, qualification, position, and place of teachers and supervisors at secondary school in the chosen district

N=194

Variable	Description	Frequency	Valid Percentage
Sex	Male	126	69.6
	Female	55	30.4
Age	20-30 Year Old	3	1.6
	30-40 Year Old	74	39.2
	40-50 Year Old	84	44.4
	50-60 Year Old	28	14.8
Experience	5-10 Year	16	8.4
	10-15 Year	45	23.7
	15-20 Year	56	29.5
	20-25 Year	46	24.2
	25 and more	27	14.2
Qualification	A Medium Level	3	1.6
	A University Level	186	97.9
	A Master Level	0	0
	A PhD Holder	1	.5
Position	Teacher	152	80.0
	Supervisor	33	17.4
	Other	5	2.6
Place	Inside a city	140	73.7
	In a sub-urban area	36	18.9
	In a rural area	14	7.4

Table 6.2: Names, positions, universities, and experience of the interviewees listed as they presented in the present research

N= 9

No.	Name	Position	University	Experience
1	Fathy Younis	Prof. Dr. of Curriculum and Instruction (Arabic language)	Ain Shams University, Cairo, Egypt	More than 30 Year
2	Roshdy Te'ama	Prof. Dr. of Curriculum and Instruction (Arabic language)	El Mansora University, Egypt	More than 30 Year
3	Abdellatif Abu Bakr	Dr. of Curriculum and Instruction (Arabic language)	Suez Canal University, Egypt	More than 15 Year
4	Fawzy Abdelkadr	Dr. of Curriculum and Instruction (Arabic language)	Suez Canal University, Egypt	More than 15 Year
5	Mohamed El zany	Dr. of Curriculum and Instruction (Arabic language)	El Mansoura University, Egypt	More than 10 Year
6	Fayza Awad	Prof. Dr. of Curriculum and Instruction (Arabic language)	Ain Shams University, Cairo, Egypt	More than 30 Year
7	Ahmed Zanhom	Dr. of Curriculum and Instruction (Arabic language)	Kafrelsheikh University	More than 15 Year
8	Mohamed El Morsy	Prof. Dr. of Curriculum and Instruction (Arabic language)	El Mansoura University, Egypt	More than 25 Year
9	Hassan Shehata	Prof. Dr. of Curriculum and Instruction (Arabic language)	Ain Shams University, Cairo, Egypt	More than 30 Year

Table 6.6: Analysis of an open-ended question on reading literacy targets

N = 65

No.	Item Description	Frequency
1	Use the context clues to understand a text	5
2	Develop creative reading e.g. create new ideas, poems, or literary texts depending on reading	9
3	Develop a proper oral reading	6
4	Develop positive attitudes and interests in reading	7
5	Develop ability to identify and choose appropriate reading materials	1
6	Identify the purpose for reading	1
7	Develop deep understanding of a text	16
8	Benefit from reading in solving problems, doing research, conversations, or writings in every day life in a creative way	16
9	Develop critical reading	13
10	Appreciate the value of literary texts	5
11	Distinguish characteristic features of texts	8
12	Develop free reading	1
13	Memorize some literary texts	2
14	Develop vocabulary repertoire	1
15	All targets have been covered on the questionnaire	22

Table 6.8: Analysis of an open-ended question on reading literacy content

N = 97

No.	Item Description	Frequency
1	Literary texts	66
2	Religious texts	64
3	Range of texts i.e. literary and expository	61
4	Texts involve different critical and international issues e.g. peace.	43
5	Autobiography and biography texts	40
6	Texts chosen by students	21
7	Informational texts	35
8	Media texts	13
9	International literature i.e. texts from different cultures and traditions	11
10	Non-continuous texts	7
11	Digital texts	3
12	Handwritten texts	1
13	All texts types are important	6

Table 6.12: Analysis of an open-ended question on reading literacy instruction

N = 42

No	Item description	frequency
1	Emphasizing students self-learning of reading	1
2	Developing critical reading	2
3	Promoting strategic reading	2
4	Developing oral reading skills e.g. expression, good articulation.	3
5	Helping students to use reading in their everyday language use e.g. writing essays, doing research, or even reading boards in the streets.	5
6	Developing extensive reading	8
7	Using libraries e.g. classroom, school and outside or general libraries	4
8	Using reading in a small groups	1
9	Considering what students produce in their writings as a result of reading	1
10	Using discussion, dialogue and conversation techniques	6
11	Modeling from teacher in oral reading	1
12	Feeding back to students about their reading mistakes	1
13	Integrating between reading and the other language skills	2
14	Discussing deeply students' opinions	3
15	Helping students to use context to understand a text	1
16	Teaching in a funny environment	1
17	Training on how to listen carefully for some one who read	1
28	Explaining who much reading is important for the students	3
19	Developing deep understanding and making inferences	3
20	Every thing has been covered on the questionnaire	12

Table 6.14: Analysis of an open-ended question on reading literacy assessment

N = 42

No	Item description	frequency
1	Assessing students conversations and dialogue in the classroom by teacher	7
2	Assessing interest in reading	1
3	Assessing reading through writing e.g. writing an essay, reporting or summarizing or doing research	8
4	Using self-assessment	2
5	Variation in assessment methods	4
6	Assessing oral reading	4
7	Assessing of reading skills	1
8	Using formative assessment on daily and weekly bases	2
9	Using texts which have not been seen by students during the course of study.	1
10	Assessing reading as an independent subject (using a separate exam)	1
11	Concentrating on assessing deep understanding	2
12	Assessing critical reading	2
13	Every thing has been covered on the questionnaire	17