**READING COMPREHENSION II**

**Note: March 26th, 2014**

**Reading: a skill**

**SENTENCE CLUES**

Eventhough sentence clues are not always clear-cut as described in Bazerman’s statement (1985: 7), the strategies to learn meaning from the clues are valuabe since context clues are frequently provided to alert readers. In this case, it is a good idea to learn the strategies how to understand word meaning from the text itself. Speaking about this strategies, Bazerman (1985) mentions 8 (eight) strategies to grasp meaning from the context.

1. Some sentences serve word meaning through a definition by means of punctuation.

For example: *Origami* – Japanese paper folding – is family fun.

The *addax*, a large pale-colored animal much like the antelope, has two

spiral horns.

Punctuation: dashes ( − ), parentheses ( ), brackets [ ], and commas

1. A helping word, along with punctuation, provides important clues.

For example: Mary felt *perturbed*, that is, she was greatly disturbed by her sister’s actions.

Helping words: *that is, meaning, such as, or, is called*

1. Opposite. Some sentences tell the opposite of what a new word means. From its opposite, the meaning of the word can be figured out.

For example: Parents who constantly spank their children can hardly be called *lenient.a good guess for the meaning of* lenient*.*

Opposite: if the parents are *lenient*, they do not often punish your children. *Merciful* or *gentle* would a good guess for the maning of *lenient*.

1. The reader’s experiences sometimes may help him to guess meaning a new word.

For example: The *cacophonous* rattling made Maria cover her ears.

Experience: something that would make us cover our ears would be a noise, unpleasant *or jarring*.

1. Sentences before or after a sentence containing a difficult word. Those sentences sometimes explain the meaning of the difficult word.

For example: Mozart gave his first public recital at the age of six. By age thirteen he had

written symphonies and an operetta. He is justly called a child *prodigy*.

Those sentences: learning from those sentences, it would be certainly take a remarkably talented person to do these things. An extraordinary person, then, would be a *prodigy*.

1. Some sentences are written just to give the definition of difficult word.

For example: One of the remarkable features of the Nile Valley is the *fertility* of its soil.

The rich earth that supported plant growth made it possible for Egyptians to

thrive in a dry region.

Explanation: the second sentence tells the meaning of *fertility* by giving the ideas: (1) that the soil was rich, and (2) it supported plant growth.

1. An example gives an idea of certain definition for a new word.

For example: Select a *periodical* from among the following: *Playboy, Time, Reader’s*

*Digest,* or *Seventeen*.

The sentence does not say that a *periodical* is a magazine, but the examples give the idea that *periodical* is a magazine.

1. The familiar word may help to explain the unfamiliar word.

For example: A *formidable* enemy is one to be feared.

Familiar word: *formidable* – through the clues in the sentence – means *fearful* or *dreadful*.

**Exercises**

**Using Sentence Clues**

The word in *italics* (slanted type) in each of the following sentences may have a meaning that you do not know. Try to use hints in the sentences in order to make up a definition. After you write the word in the first column, write your own definition in the second column. Do not use a dictionary.

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| 1 | After many weeks of work scraping off old paint and varnish that had been applied through the years, we managed to *renovate* the old desk. |  |  |
| 2 | At exam time Carl’s hands shook and sweated so much that he could not hold a pen. His heart pounded and his stomach churned, even though he knew the subject very well. He really had a strange *phobia* about taking tests. |  |  |
| 3 | It was clear that he did not care whether they stayed or whether they went home. Such *indifference* made them feel terrible. |  |  |
| 4 | *Fibrinogen* – a substance in the blood needed for clotting – does not always work properly in all human beings. |  |  |
| 5 | A *byline*, that is, the line at the head of a newspaper or a magazine article that tells the author’s name, is rarely given to an inexperienced reporter. |  |  |
| 6 | The class covers only the most important philosophical ideas of the nineteenth century, not the *trivial* ones. |  |  |
| 7 | *Myopia* (near-sightedness) not only refers to a physical disorder but can also apply to people who make decisions without thinking of the consequences. |  |  |
| 8 | Many fast-food restaurant operate by means of *franchises*. A franchise is permission to sell products that a manufacturer grants to a dealer. |  |  |
| 9 | Even if you *exaggerate* only occasionally, you risk getting a reputation for stretching the truth. |  |  |
| 10 | A good supervisor can recognize instantly the *adept* workers from the unskilled ones. |  |  |