Comprehension: A Paradigm for Cognition

By Walter Kintsch

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In this book, Walter Kintsch presents a theory of human text comprehension and extends his analysis to related areas. Comprehension is conceptualized as a two-stage process: first, approximate, inaccurate representations are constructed via context insensitive construction rules, which are then integrated via a spreading activation constraint satisfaction process. In Part I, the general theory is presented and an attempt is made to situate it within the current theoretical landscape in cognitive science. The second part addresses many of the topics that are typically found in a cognitive psychology text, including how word meanings are identified in a discourse context; how words are combined to form coherent representations of texts, both at the local and global level; what the role is of working memory in comprehension; how relevant knowledge is activated during reading; and what is the distinction between remembering a text and learning from a text. Researchers in the fields of psychology and linguistics will find this to be a most welcome contribution from one of the discipline's most celebrated scholars.

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Comprehension: A Paradigm for Cognition By Walter Kintsch Bibliography

- Sales Rank: #1199107 in Books
- Brand: Brand: Cambridge University Press
- Published on: 1998-01-13
- Original language: English
- Number of items: 1
- Dimensions: 8.98" h x 1.06" w x 5.98" l, 1.42 pounds
- Binding: Paperback
- 480 pages

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