

"TEACHING READING TO ENGLISH LEARNERS"

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Abstract: *Reading is one of the most essential skills that language learners should obtain, especially as it builds vocabulary and leads to lifelong learning and improvement. This article not only gives practical suggestions for the classroom, but also emphasizes the importance of both teachers` and students` understanding of the reading process and reading comprehension. Developing students` reading comprehension skills is a challenging but crucial task for educators.*

Key words: *comprehension, specific reading tasks, process, reading skills*

Among the four language skills, reading is one of the most important ones to master. It is essential for understanding different texts, improving writing skills, and for learning more generally. It is also a "requisite for social activities because of email, texting, and numerous Web applications that people use on an everyday basis" (Kilpatrick, Malatesha & Wagner, 2019, p.83). The future of education is considered a networked future.

Reading an active process involving the reader in ongoing interaction with the text in this process, the reader uses various acquired abilities. Also, it is receptive process, in which reader takes out meaning from the spoken or written discourse.

According to Goodman (1971, p.135) "Reading is a psycholinguistic guessing game by which reader or any other language user reconstruct a message which has been encoded by a writer as a graphic display" others as "an art". Reading develops gradually; and the reader does not become fluent suddenly, or immediately".

Goodman's reader is a fluent and proficient reader who is more suited to an academic setting than a typical English language learner who is learning the language only as a life skill. His reader approaches a text with expectations based upon a reader's knowledge of the subject. As a reader progresses through the material, the reader confirms or revises these expectations and builds further. This confirmation of expectancy is conducted through the extraction of the minimum sampling of the text. Orthographic, syntactic, and semantic clues in the material are used in the reconstruction of the text. If there is an obvious flaw in the reader's interpretation, the reader may check for the source of the mistake. Words may be processed on the basis of syntactic, or semantic expectancy, or broken down into

roots or affixes, or even broken down into speech components. The latter is probably rare for the fluent reader because there will be few unknown words in their vocabulary. "Knowing the meaning of words is obviously crucial for reading comprehension, but the link between vocabulary and reading flows in both directions" (Oakhill, Cain & Carsten, 2015, p.66).

There are lots of different types of reading skills that correspond to the many different reading purposes. Reading is always purposeful, in the sense that any motivation to read a given text is triggered by some individual purpose or task, whether imposed internally or externally, such as test taking. Nunan (1991, p.70) suggests that "reading is a dynamic process in which the text elements interact with other factors outside the text, most particularly with the readers knowledge of the experiential content of the text."

Reading comprehension is defined as "a thinking process by which a reader selects facts, information, or ideas from printed materials, determines the meanings the author intended to transmit; decides how they relate to previous knowledge; and judges their appropriateness and worth for meeting the learner's own objectives" (Veeravagu, et al, 2010, p.206). Comprehension is like the process of building bridges between what is known and the unknown. Learners start with a knowledge framework and attempt to fit new information into it. Reading strategy instruction can help learners to become aware of their effective (and ineffective) use of strategies and can build reading skills. Most second language learners who are already schooled in a native language, reading comprehension is basically a matter of developing appropriate and efficient comprehension strategies.

Most students develop personal strategies to understand what they read. Reading strategies are often taught by teachers and utilized by students to improve reading comprehension.

More proficient readers vary their strategies depending on the nature of the task and the context, while less proficient readers either use fewer strategies to undertake the task or follow ones that are inappropriate for either the task or the context. It is important to note that a task involves not only examination, but also meaning-focused work involving learners in comprehending, producing and/or interacting in the target language. Therefore, a task entails communicative language use in which the users attention is focused on meaning rather than on linguistic structure.

It is effective to teach reading strategies to ELLs and that students can benefit from such instruction. Strategy instruction also develops student knowledge about the reading process, introduces ELLs to specific strategies, and provides them with opportunities to discuss and practice strategies while reading. That said, the

ultimate goal of reading instruction is not to teach individual reading strategies but rather to develop strategic readers.

All students are different; hence, there is no single method or combination of methods that can teach all students to read successfully. It is best if teachers have a knowledge of different methods for teaching reading and that they are aware of the learning styles and preferences of their learners, so they can create the appropriate balance of methods. As these will allow students to enjoy (or at least feel comfortable with) reading in a foreign language, and to read unfamiliar, different texts without help, at appropriate speed, silently and with enough understanding.

Reading is primarily about comprehension and it is one of the most important skills for students to develop and that requires the orchestration of many different skills and abilities. Therefore, the most effective reading program would be composed of instruction in the critical skills and consistent practice in different kinds of reading. In developing reading strategies, there is no single method that suits all learners and teachers should be wary of the "one size fits all" approach and strategy. Teachers have to effectively and systematically alter various methods that will benefit their learners the most. As the students become better readers, they will determine what they read, why they read, and how they read.

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