

Implementing multiple strategies to foster reading comprehension in teaching English

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Abstract: Reading skill is considered as a receptive skill which plays the main role for developing the other skills included writing, speaking and listening. However, majority English teachers and learners find teaching and learning reading quiet boring or challenging. That is why; teachers are recognized the state-of-art reading ways to teach in the classroom. This paper will discuss about powerful strategies for involving learners in developing reading skill and fluency that support reading comprehension, fluency, writing, grammar and vocabulary.

Key words: Reading, receptive skill, boring, challenging, strategies, comprehension, fluency

Introduction

It is widely known that there is lack of reading development hampers of English language proficiency (August and Shanahan, 2006). As the proficiency of reading plays the main role for students learning process in a number of content fields, it has produced many investigations so far (Brown, 2007). As the reading is considered a receptive skill which plays the main role to enhance vocabulary, it requires most teachers to be aware of the strategies and methods. Interactive read-aloud is regarded as inspiring way of teaching reading by using gestures and different voices of different characters, which motivate learners to imagine and discuss for comprehension.

1. **Interactive read-aloud** has been used as a traditional method for young learners, but it is also recommended for adult learners. This strategy tend to be used when students are required to read 'tough text'(Jordan and Herrel,2001). It is considered as a valuable way to utilize for learning English language due to checking them to understand the meaning of the text by clarifying the words in the context that allow learners to connect text with their experience (Short, Echevarria, 2004). According to Trelease's investigation (2013), read –aloud reading strategy showed the promising results when it was used for high school administrators with low score in reading and understanding. Moreover, it was also found from his research that students who often read aloud or listen to more essential vocabulary to increase their comprehension, vocabulary and interest in reading compared to those who do not (Trelease, 2013). In this case, when teacher reads the text loudly students have a visual imagination, paraphrasing support and motivation to listen thoroughly. Motivation plays also the main role when teachers were observed by students in terms of reading the texts fluently and with emotion. It was documented as students' choice on reading and the author was the same (Wood, 1994). Such multiple chances of reading aloud strategy broaden learners' comprehension and involve them to practice new words in their speaking and writing by using extension activities (Short and Echevarria, 2004).

2. **Shared reading** is regarded as another strategy that instructors utilize the books, charts and other texts for students' reading when the text seemed to learners challenging to read autonomously. For this strategy, when learners are motivated to read the text with teachers, they try to read the text together or follow the teachers' reading and pronunciation if they find difficulty reading along with the teachers. Therefore, multiple copied small books, poetry charts, song lyrics, interactive whiteboards and large platform projectors are considered as the main source for students and teachers to see the words clearly and to work effectively in the classroom (Tompkins, 2009). Using digital tools for presenting the text or books with presentations on the projector can allow students to highlight the main words. Shared reading strategy also involves learners to understand the meaning of the text by building their personal experience and using illustrations and communications for developing vocabulary base.

3. **Close reading strategy** is also suggested to help learners understand the meaning of the text deeply by encouraging them to read and reread deliberately. In this strategy, students focus on the individual word and sentence meanings and the order of unfold sentences to develop their comprehension in terms of ideas if the text. Boyles also pointed that close reading develop learners' deep understanding of the text (2012). To use this, teachers should distinguish the differences from traditional methods of reading instructions and comprehension questions.

Figure 1. Differences Between Traditional Comprehension Questions and Questions Associated with Close Reading.

What did Ethan and Alexis do to make Maya feel bad?	How did the author use dialogue to help you, the reader, understand how Maya felt when Ethan and Alexis teased her?
How did Maya change after Ethan and Alexis teased her?	How did the author use description to help the reader understand how Maya felt?
How did Maya solve her problem?	How did the author use the Tikis to demonstrate how Maya could solve her problem?

Source: Questions based on *Bullies: Playground Push-around* by April Sopczak, 2013, published by Neon Tiki Tribe.

There are several steps to implement close reading into teaching process in the following. Teachers should stop and discuss vocabulary in the context and word choices when they demonstrate close reading. For example, if teachers read the story using similes in the text, they stop to discuss what the simile means in the context and how it helps to make sense the story. To make close reading most effective in teaching English, teachers are recommended to choose short texts with ample complexity to support learners understand the meaning in the text. After reading and discussing the text with students, the next step involves teachers in preparing questions that re-examine students' comprehension.

Figure 2. Sample Questions for close reading strategy (Herrell, 2012, page 79).

Standard	Sample Questions
Conventions of language	How would omitting the comma in this sentence change its meaning?
Word meaning	What does the word <i>counted</i> mean in this sentence? How does it convey the character's feeling?
Word relationships and nuances	How would changing <i>wanted</i> to <i>desired</i> change the meaning of this sentence? Why do you think the author chose to use <i>wanted</i> ?
Domain-specific word meaning	What does the word <i>bed</i> mean in this science text? How does the word relate to the bed you sleep in at night?
Identifying central ideas or themes	What phrase is repeated throughout this essay? Why did the authors use it repeatedly.
Compare and contrast texts	What do this poem and short story have in common besides the title?

4. **Repeated Reading** strategy is one of the most useful ways of developing students' fluency, understanding and pronunciation (Cunningham and Allington, 2010). This approach makes students write scripts for theatre of reader which creates opportunities to work on both their speaking and writing skills. Various scripts can be chosen in terms of English learners' language level and they should be motivated to write their own favourite storybooks by using their scripts to

grow literacy. For reader's theatre activities, learners are encouraged to read and reread the scripts and practice the reader's theatre. Repeated reading of familiar text has been confirmed as a powerful way to support learners' fluency in English language learning (Carrick, 2006, Young and Rasinski, 2009). For this strategy, teachers are recommended to select fascinating books included dialogues for the beginning script writing activity in terms of their students' interests as well as their language levels. Such activities become interesting to learners by creating their own dialogues for characters who do not speak in a real chosen book. The demonstration of writing script formats can be shown as a cartoon format with speech balloons, written format and script writing format (Harrell and Jordon, 2012). The main benefits for students when they repeat familiar reading texts are to develop their confidence and fluency in producing English language.

Using reading strategies in teaching English is a vital way in helping both literacy skill of learners and love for reading. While the reading strategy is supportive to motivate, it is also an important strategy for teachers to sustain students' attention and develop other skills during using them effectively.

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