



THE USAGE OF METHODS IN TEACHING READING SKILL

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Introduction. The theme of the paper is implementing teaching reading skills at schools and Lyceums. It is a practical teaching method that we teach the youth with these methods. The reason for reading depends very much on the purpose for reading. The use of intensive methods in the classroom is discussed, with the pupil benefiting from the exposure to real language being used in a real context. The actuality of the work is to identify the importance of reading skills in language learning and teaching, it is essential for language teachers to help their pupils become effective learners by acquiring accepted reading skills. The aim is to overview theoretical basis of teaching language and its development, to analyze the existent problems in teaching reading skills and find the ways out of this problem by suggesting a series of exercises that can be useful in classroom activities.

Thus, according to the set aim we are to solve the following tasks:

to determine the aim and nature of teaching reading skills;

to describe the method in teaching reading;

material design, exercises, activities and games for teaching reading at school

§1.1. THEORETICAL BASIS OF TEACHING READING SKILLS

Reading is about understanding written texts. It is a complex activity that involves both perception and thought. Reading consists of two related processes: word recognition and comprehension. Word recognition refers to the process of perceiving how written symbols correspond to one's spoken language. Comprehension is the process of making sense of words, sentences and connected text. Readers typically make use of background knowledge, vocabulary, grammatical knowledge, experience with text and other strategies to help them understand written text.

Reading skills are the cognitive processes that a reader uses in making sense of a text. For fluent readers, most of the reading skills are employed unconsciously and automatically. When confronted with a challenging text, fluent readers apply these skills consciously and strategically in order to comprehend¹⁷.

There are numerous reading skills that pupils need to master to become proficient readers: extracting main ideas, reading for specific information, understanding text organization, predicting, checking comprehension, inferring, dealing with unfamiliar words, linking ideas, understanding complex sentences, understanding writer's style and writing summaries¹⁸. But if adult learners are psychologically prepared for reading and the

¹⁷ Beatrice S. Teaching reading in a second Language / S. Beatrice, E. D. Mikulecky. - London: Pearson Education, 2008.p4.

¹⁸ <http://nsambatcoumar.files.wordpress.com/2010/10/teaching-reading-in-english.pdf> ,p2.



matter is only in acquiring basic reading skills, enriching vocabulary stock and mastering at least few grammar rules, then the situation with young elementary readers is quite different.

Learners read effectively only when they are ready. The reader's preparedness to read is called 'reading readiness'. According to Thorndike's law of learning, the first requisite for beginning reading is an interest in reading. Reading stories, allowing children to draw and read charts, displaying readable messages, providing picture books and labeling the objects will stimulate their interests¹⁹.

At any level, the following skills are necessary for a pupil to become a proficient reader:

- automatic, rapid letter recognition
- automatic, rapid word recognition
- the ability to use context as an aid to comprehension
- the ability to use context when necessary as a conscious aid to word recognition.

For visual discrimination a teacher may use exercises of identification of the same picture in a row, for visual and auditory discrimination one may find useful exercises of identification of same letters in a row, finding the odd one, picking out word pairs (yes-yes, *tit-tit*), circling the odd word pair in a group. To train word identification and word recognition tasks like 'complete the letters or words with the help of pictures in a sentence' may be appropriate.

While teaching reading the following approaches should not be neglected:

1. Focus on one skill at a time. Explain the purpose of working on this skill, and convince the pupils of its importance in reading effectively.
3. Work on an example of using the skill with the whole class. Explain your thinking aloud as you do the exercise.
4. Assign pupils to work in pairs on an exercise where they practice using the same skill. Require them to explain their thinking to each other as they work.
5. Discuss pupils' answers with the whole class. Ask them to explain how they got their answers. Encourage polite disagreement, and require explanations of any differences in their answers.
6. In the same class, and also in the next few classes, assign individuals to work on more exercises that focus on the same skill with increasing complexity. Instruct pupils to work in pairs whenever feasible.
7. Ask individual pupils to complete an exercise using the skill to check their own ability and confidence in using it.
8. In future lessons, lead the pupils to apply the skill, as well as previously mastered skills, to a variety of texts.

Reading becomes effective when teacher starts with words that are familiar to pupils, uses simple structures, blackboard and flashcards, and gives emphasis to recognizing and understanding the meaning of a word simultaneously. As far as young elementary learners are concerned teaching reading should be started when a child can learn his/her own mother-tongue. Also, it is suggested to use some kind of reading repetition or practice and progress monitoring. Moreover, teachers should always keep in mind the various problems of reading a foreign language.

¹⁹ <http://nsambatcoumar.files.wordpress.com/2010/10/teaching-reading-in-english.pdf>



It is useful to know if a pupil can read nonsense words such as '*flep, tridding and pertollic*' as the ability to read nonsense words depends on rapid and accurate association of sounds with symbols. Good readers do this easily so they can decipher new words and attend to the meaning of the passage. Poor readers usually are slower and make more mistakes in sounding out words. Their comprehension suffers as a consequence. Poor readers improve if they are taught in an organized, systematic manner how to decipher the spelling code and sound words out.

There are also several principles behind the teaching of reading:

Principle 1: Reading is not a passive skill. Reading is an incredibly active occupation. To do it successfully, we have to understand what the words mean, see the pictures the words are painting, understand the arguments, and work out if we agree with them. If we do not do these things - and if pupils do not do these things - then we only just scratch the surface of the text and we quickly forget it.

Principle 2: Pupils need to be engaged with what they are reading. As with everything else in lessons, pupils who are not engaged with the reading text - not actively interested in what they are doing - are less likely to benefit from it. When they are really fired up by the topic or the task, they get much more from what is in front of them.

Principle 3: Pupils should be encouraged to respond to the content of a reading text not just to the language. Of course, it is important to study reading texts for the way they use language, the number of paragraphs they contain and how many times they use relative clauses. But the meaning, the message of the text, is just as important and we must give pupils a chance to respond to that message in some way.

Principle 4: Prediction is a major factor in reading.

When we read texts in our own language, we frequently have a good idea of the content before we actually read. Book covers give us a hint of what's in the book, photographs and headlines hint at what articles are about and reports look like reports before we read a single word. The moment we get this hint - the book cover, the headline, the word-processed page - our brain starts predicting what we are going to read. Expectations are set up and the active process of reading is ready to begin. Teachers should give pupils 'hints' so that they can predict what's coming too. It will make them better and more engaged readers.

Principle 5: Match the task to the topic. We could give pupils Hamlet's famous soliloquy 'To be or not to be' and ask them to say how many times the infinitive is used. We could give them a restaurant menu and ask them to list the ingredients alphabetically. There might be reasons for both tasks, but, on the face of it, they look a bit silly. We will probably be more interested in what Hamlet means and what the menu foods actually are. Once a decision has been taken about what reading text the pupils are going to read, we need to choose good reading tasks - the right kind of questions, engaging and useful puzzles etc.

Principle 6: Good teachers exploit reading texts to the full. Any reading text is full of sentences, words, ideas, descriptions etc. It doesn't make sense just to get pupils to read it and then drop it to move on to something else. Good teachers integrate the reading text



into interesting class sequences, using the topic for discussion and further tasks, using the language for Study and later Activation.

§2.1. WHAT IS JIGSAW READING?

The jigsaw technique is a method of organizing classroom activity that makes students dependent on each other to succeed. It breaks classes into groups and breaks assignments into pieces that the group assembles to complete the (jigsaw) puzzle. It was designed by social psychologist Elliot Aronson to help weaken racial cliques in forcibly integrated schools.

The technique splits classes into mixed groups to work on small problems that the group collates into a final outcome. For example, an in-class assignment is divided into topics. Students are then split into groups with one member assigned to each topic. Working individually, each student learns about his or her topic and presents it to their group. Next, students gather into groups divided by topic. Each member presents again to the topic group. In same-topic groups, students reconcile points of view and synthesize information. They create a final report. Finally, the original groups reconvene and listen to presentations from each member. The final presentations provide all group members with an understanding of their own material, as well as the findings that have emerged from topic-specific group discussion.

It is a cooperative learning method that brings about both individual accountability and achievement of the team goals. These processes derive its name from the jigsaw puzzle as this process involves in putting the parts of the assignment together to form a whole picture of the assignment which is similar to the jigsaw puzzle. The assignment is divided into parts and the class is also divided into the same number of groups as that of the assignment. Each of these groups is given a different topic and allowed to learn about it. These groups are shuffled to form new groups consisting of members from each group.

How to use jigsaw

1. Introduce the strategy and the topic to be studied.
2. Assign each student to a "home group" of 3-5 students who reflect a range of reading abilities.
3. Determine a set of reading selections and assign one selection to each student.
4. Create "expert groups" that consist of students across "home groups" who will read the same selection.
5. Give all students a framework for managing their time on the various parts of the jigsaw task.
6. Provide key questions to help the "expert groups" gather information in their particular area.
7. Provide materials and resources necessary for all students to learn about their topics and become "experts."

Note: It is important that the reading material assigned is at appropriate instructional levels (90–95% reading accuracy).

8. Discuss the rules for reconvening into "home groups" and provide guidelines as each "expert" reports the information learned.



9. Prepare a summary chart or graphic organizer for each "home group" as a guide for organizing the experts' information report.

10. Remind students that "home group" members are responsible to learn all content from one another.

CONCLUSION. In the present course paper there has been made an attempt to analyze peculiarities of teaching reading methods in the light of foreign language acquisition and English teaching methodology.

On the basis of the material collected the following conclusions may be inferred:

– Reading is one of the key language skills that pupils should acquire in the process of learning a foreign language. Moreover, it is not only the goal of education but also a means of learning a foreign language as while reading pupils review sounds and letters, vocabulary and grammar, memorize the spelling of words, the meaning of words and word combinations i. e. they polish their foreign language knowledge.

– Reading skills are the cognitive processes that a reader uses in making sense of a text. To become a proficient reader language learners should master automatic letter and word recognition and the ability to use context as an aid to comprehension.

– To make teaching reading effective it is advisable to focus on one skill at a time, explain the purpose of given tasks, establish connection with the previously acquired knowledge and skills, make usage of visual and audio aids, discuss problematic issues etc. Teachers should also keep in mind that reading is not a passive skill, make pupils engaged with what they are reading, encouraged them to respond to the content of a reading text not just to the language, to make sure that tasks correspond to the topic and level of the pupils etc.

– The procedure of introducing new vocabulary to pupils may take the following route: step 1: word introduction → step 2: pupil-friendly explanation → step 3: illustrative examples → step 4: checking understanding.

– Teachers should be very reasonable and careful with error correction and choose the most suitable for the case as it may psychologically influence learners. The correction may be made by the teacher or another pupil during or after reading.

All the things considered, reading is a language activity and ought not to be divorced from other language activities. To read effectively in English second-language pupils need to learn to think in English. The methods of any teaching reading lesson should be chosen according to the learner's level of skill development. Teaching reading is a job for an expert who has to create conditions whereby learners can learn and develop their reading skills.

The research is only a modest contribution to the issue of teaching reading methodology and thus further investigation into the sphere is highly recommended.

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