
ROLE OF A READING SPECIALIST IN ENHANCING THE ESL READING SKILLS OF THE ARABIC STUDENTS WITH REFERENCE TO OMAN

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ABSTRACT

ESL is over written concept in academic era. In aspects of teachers view the article is highlighting few strategic approaches which might be suitable to the Arabic students in Oman. Being a reading teacher of the second language (English), a connective and creative work structure needed to enhance the reading skills of the students. The comprehension reading is the base of the ESL. The list of activities identified in a sequence and a model is identified with the support of the relevant reviews. The sequence is noted as Thought process and Setting Goals, Resource Allocation, Approach, Task on Time, Implementation, Self-Assessment and Reflection. Since reading is the elementary activity in the ESL the significance is taken for the write-up.

Keywords: Reading Specialist, ESL reading skills, Thought, Goals, Resources, Approach, Task, Assessment, Reflection, Process

1. INTRODUCTION

Teaching is identified as one of the noble profession. Teachers are considered as competent to provide knowledge to improve their students' skill sets. Teaching second language is challenging in the foreign countries like Arab. A second language teacher is a role model for the students who would enter into the new language learning. Being passionate, active and creative, teachers can definitely conquest the situation in the classroom.

Teaching a second language is not easy. But it can be taught effectively with patience and hard labour with the help of self-invented methodologies suitable for one's students. For this a teacher has to, first of all, study the problems and difficulties faced by his students in the process of

learning English. Once the problems and difficulties are found out, the task of teaching becomes easy for an intelligent teacher. A competent, intelligent, hard working and cooperative teacher is necessary for learning a second language. (Asghar Ali Ansari, April, 2012)

A learner is lucky if he gets a competent teacher while learning a second language. When he starts learning a second or foreign language, a student faces a lot of problems. At this stage his teacher comes for his rescue. He tries to understand his student's problems, solves them and saves the students from depression. (Asghar Ali Ansari, April, 2012)

2. AIM OF A READING SPECIALIST

The teachers who are behind to develop reading skills of the students of the second language are represented as **READING SPECIALIST** by International Reading Association. Reading specialists have specialized knowledge of assessment and diagnosis that is vital for developing, implementing, and evaluating the literacy program in general, and in designing instruction for individual students. Reading specialists can assess the reading strengths and needs of students.

The main goal of reading teachers is to minimize reading difficulties and to maximize comprehension by providing culturally relevant information. (CARLA CALLEGARO CORRÊA KADER*VIDYA, v. 28, n. 1, p. 105-112, jan/jun, 2008 - Santa Maria, 2009. ISSN 0104-270 X).

According to Brown (2001), a half-century ago, reading specialists might have argued that the best way to teach reading is through bottom up methodology: teach symbols, grapheme-phoneme correspondences, syllables and lexical recognition first, and then comprehension would derive from the sum of the parts.

There is a research talks about a combination of top-down and bottom-up processing, or what has come to be called “interactive reading”, is almost always a primary ingredient in successful teaching methodology because both processes are important. In practice, a reader continually shifts from one focus to another, initially adopting a top-down approach to predict probable meaning, then moving on to the bottom-up approach to check whether that is really what the writer says (NUTTALL, 1996).

Provide explicit instruction of useful comprehension strategies. Good readers use strategies to support their understanding of text. Teachers help students become good readers by teaching them how to use the strategies of monitoring, predicting, inferring, questioning, connecting, summarizing, visualizing, and organizing (Keene & Zimmermann, 1997; Miller, 2002; Pardo, 2002).

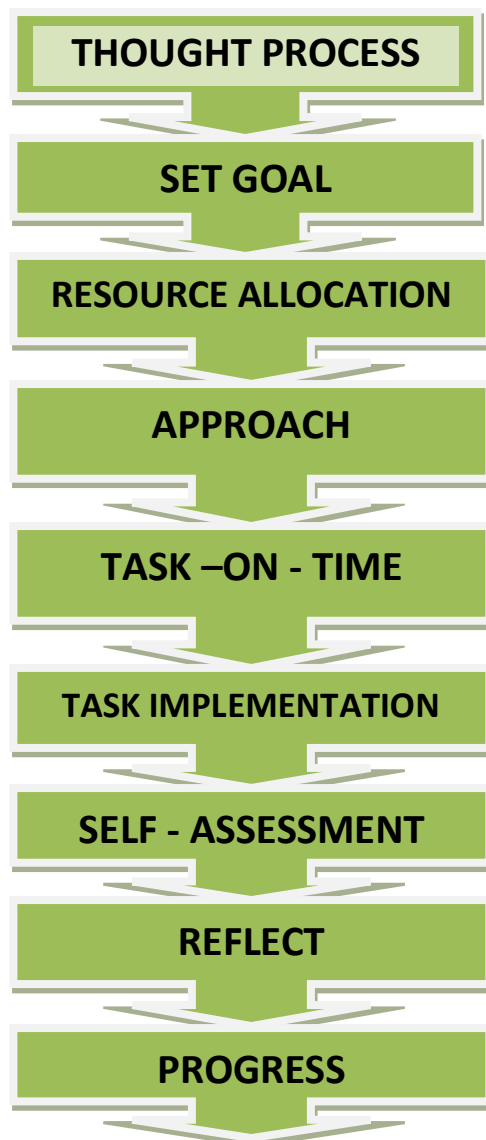
The role of the teacher in the reading classroom is to compensate the individual variation among readers, especially readers from different cultural backgrounds. One way to minimize this situation is to manipulate either the text/or the reader, using bottom up or top down strategies or adopting the microskills proposed by Brown (2001).

As Lyman (1996) stated, "Given the opportunity, the reader who finds a really good book, a book that has ideas he or she truly wants to learn about, frequently will transcend his or her level of reading performance. The approaches that emphasize the use of authentic texts and self-selection are designed to build reading skills and to create lifetime readers".

3. PROCESSES OF TEACHING COMPREHENSION READING METHOD

A second language teacher has to have a standard design and objective before starting to plan the lesson. There are various methods of teaching, second language reading. Planning an effective technique of teaching gives success to a teacher. In general, reading comprehension is considered effective process of teaching second language reading. Effective reading is the most important avenue of effective learning. Reading is interrelated with the total educational process and hence, educational success requires successful reading. Reading is the identification of the symbols and the association of appropriate meaning with them. It requires identification and comprehension. Comprehension skills help the learner to understand the meaning of words in isolation and in context. (Dr. K. K. Palani, Vol.– III, Issue 2(1), April 2012)

As a teacher, there are many strategies to follow second language reading class. The strategies are listed in a structured sequence.



Lesson Planning demonstrates how to plan an effective ESL lesson. It focuses attention on identifying the language skills that are the primary objective of the lesson. It also demonstrates and provides practice in developing the six stages for an effective lesson plan: Warm-up/Review, Introduction, Presentation, Practice, Application, and Evaluation.

Reading is an important activity in the process of learning. In the movement of human society, it has been given a greater importance and becoming one of the essential aspects of the functioning of human beings, who are collectively involved in the regulation of society and exposure of knowledge and revelation of literate society. Reading involves the people's participation growth

literate society. So, reading shapes good personality, ideas, right thinking and attitude change. (Dr. K. K. Palani, April 2012). Once teachers understand what is involved in comprehending and how the factors of reader, text, and context interact to create meaning, they can more easily teach their students to be effective comprehenders. (LAURA S. PARDO , Nov 2004)

3.1 Thought process and setting goals

How do teachers analyse the student's level? Understanding the students is more important in the reading. There are number of assessment techniques. Teachers must have precise skill in assessing and then develop students' skills.

1. *Finding students vocabulary level* –Identify lack of vocabulary, where students mistaken or omission of meaning of passages due to poor vocabulary.
2. Check students reading completion -reading text is vast, and take a very long time to read a text. If Students read quickly but without stress, pause, full stop, it shows the students are not visualizing what they read.
3. Finding understanding level – While reading, the inference level of the students has to be identified.
4. Identifying back ground knowledge - Students may have the background knowledge of the topic, must be taught to connect the updating with the prior information.

In achieving immediate goals in the EFL/ESL reading classroom, teachers must balance between the background knowledge presupposed by the texts the students read and the background knowledge the students really possess (CARRELL; EISTERHOLD, 2000).

3.2 Resource Allocation

Teacher has to select material according to students' competence and selected material should trigger the students thinking process and interact with all. The nature of factual source must encourage student to learn / read more. In other way, technology plays a vital role in teachers and students life. Using smart board in classroom is an advantage in teaching and learning. Using interactive board increases the interest of students in reading with different skills, which motivate the students' curious learning.

Luke and Freebody (1990, 2002) define four different reader resources: code breaking, meaning making, text using, and text analyzing. The most fundamental resource is code breaking, which is deciphering text at letter, word, and sentence-level. For many students decoding text is synonymous with 'reading' because this is the social practice they have been taught in schools. Decoding practices, including both top-down and bottom-up strategies, are usually the main focus of school reading classes. Top-down strategies include guessing meaning from context,

predicting, using background knowledge, and using text structure. Bottom-up strategies include looking up unknown vocabulary in a dictionary or glossary, working out sentence grammar, and deciphering reference chains.

3.3 Approach

The methodology is completely links with the success of planning. Whole language approach: It is a "top-down" theory of reading which emphasizes the importance of teaching language as a whole entity as contrasted with a skills oriented approach associated with the "bottom-up" model of reading (Hsu, 1994). It includes the teaching and learning of skills and/or strategies within a setting in order to accomplish a goal that cements, extends, and expands learning. It is frequently coupled with an integrated or thematic approach to learning (Reima Al-Jarf, 2007). There are few methods of approach.

A surface approach to reading is the tacit acceptance of information contained in the text. Students taking a surface approach to reading usually consider this information as isolated and unlinked facts. This leads to superficial retention of material for examinations and does not promote understanding or long-term retention of knowledge and information. In contrast, a deep approach to reading is an approach where the reader uses higher-order cognitive skills such as the ability to analyze, synthesize, solve problems, and thinks meta-cognitively in order to negotiate meanings with the author and to construct new meaning from the text. The deep reader focuses on the author's message, on the ideas she is trying to convey, the line of argument, and the structure of the argument. The reader makes connections to already known concepts and principles and uses this understanding for problem solving in new contexts. Simply put, surface readers focus on the sign, i.e., the text itself, while deep readers focus on what is signified, i.e., the meaning of the text (Bowden & Marton, 2000, p.49).

The teaching and learning activities have to be designed in order to promote a deep approach to reading and learning in consonance with the proposed objectives and learning outcomes, (Julian Hermida, Sept.2009).

3.4 Task on time

Succeeding task on time is good classroom management and good interactive process. Classroom management is a process to promote students involve in multiple activities. A well-organized classroom avoids unwanted distraction among students. Following effective rules and regulation will trim down the time spent on interruption. Practicing task on time help students to relax in and out of the room, students can begin their next activity with more transparency. Planning lessons to class allows students speed up their work and keeps students to involve on task on time. Provide regular independent reading time. Teachers can make sure they provide

students with time to read independently every day. Reading becomes better with practice, and comprehending becomes better with more reading practice (Pressley, 2003).

3.5 Task Implementation

Comprehension technique is an excellent method for action implementation. Divide students into small group according to quantitative method. Using pictures, tables, graphs or maps as a comprehension resource gives good results. Here, there are some classroom activities.

- Question about title whether words are familiar or not;
- Retell or re-read the title to know general idea or predict around text;
- Locate unknown or new words in text;
- Examine unknown words pronunciations;
- Train by looking for parts of the words or phrases;
- Divide the words into syllables and teach the sounds;
- Testing students to guess meaning of the word by reading sentence, if not make students to read- read – read....;
- Finding background knowledge of the text and find relation to it;
- Re-read the text;
- Training students to connect their background knowledge to text;
- Examine the main idea of the text;
- Preparing students to read between the lines for infer meaning; and
- Evaluate students understanding capability.

Setting tasks which allow students to read in areas which interest them and for purposes which are important to them is the best motivator. However, freedom without support is a recipe for disaster. Once again, scaffolding before and during individual or small group tasks is essential. (Lianrui Yang & Kate Wilson, 2006)

The more background knowledge a reader has that connects with the text being read, the more likely the reader will be able to make sense of what is being read (Butcher & Kintsch, 2003; Schallert & Martin, 2003).

3.6 Self-Assessment

A human has a natural self-assessment practice for his/her every move in life. Self-Assessment comes on its own learning to prove out the development. This will help in the classroom to develop student's skill. Self-assessment is regular and continuous process to identify misunderstanding, to review, to show evidence, to evaluate, to plan and to improve one's own

skill. Objectives, teaching and learning activities, and assessment- are important, assessment is the one that plays the most influential role in students' decision on whether to take a deep or surface approach to reading and learning (Gibbs, 1999 & Forsaith, 2001).

Assessment processes in which the teacher holds all the power and makes all the choices limit the potential for learner development in all of these aspects, (Dorothy Spiller, Feb 2012). According to Boud (1995), all assessment including self-assessment comprises two main elements: making decisions about the standards of performance expected and then making judgments about the quality of the performance in relation to these standards. When self-assessment is introduced, it should ideally involve students in both of these aspects.

3.7 Reflection

Reflection is an essential component of effective self-assessment; it occurs “when students think about how their work meets established criteria; they analyze the effectiveness of their efforts, and plan for improvement” (Rolheiser, Bower, & Stevahn, 2000, p. 31).

Providing a Context and Purpose for Reading Students need to have a clear idea of why they are reading and to know how the text relates to other aspects of their course. For example, before tackling a reading passage in a course book, establish the context first by using visual cues, discussion questions, or a link to students' own lives. (Lianrui Yang & Kate Wilson, 2006).

4. CONCLUSION

As a reading teacher, the authors suggest different ways and strategies to develop students reading skills. Teacher should remember to highlight the use of different plans to figure the prior knowledge to develop reading skill. Reading is an interactive process, which consists of multiple interactions between variables such as the reader's background, the classroom context, reading materials, developmental levels, teachers' instructional style, and learning goals. Teachers must use a variety of classroom teaching strategies, because no one single method can teach all readers successfully, (Timothy R. Blair, William H. Rupley, William Dee Nichols, 2007). Reading is a process of thinking, evaluating, judging, imagining, reasoning and problem solving. (Dr. K. K. Palani, Vol.– III, Issue 2(1), April 2012). As much as, connectivity and creativity of a teacher, positively relates to the reading skill development results.

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