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THE ROLE OF PRACTICAL STRATEGIES IN DEVELOPING READING COMPREHENSION

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Annotation
This article deals with reading as a main skill for developing teaching foreign languages. In this research work one can find many interesting facts and details about reading comprehension and efficient practices to teaching reading to students with the help of reading techniques and methods. According the chapter, teaching reading comprehension aims at:
1. Letting better grasping the context, sequence and the characters narrated in text.
2. Certain parts of the text can confuse readers. Reading comprehension skills works on this aspect to get the clear idea of the meaning of the text.
3. Helping to create the questionnaire based on the text and theme or idea of the text. It often helps to better understand the paragraph.
4. Helping to link the event of narration with our own experiences and predict the next probable event in the course based on the information given in the narration.
Comprehension is the ultimate goal of reading. However, there are a number of factors which may interfere with an individual's ability to comprehend text material.

Key words: efficient practice,methods, open-endedness**,** brainstorming, adapting materials**,** reading strategies, proficient reading, comprehension monitoring, multiple strategy, summarization

Teachers are encouraged to vary topics, methods materials and activities in order to accommodate all learners. While some items mentioned above may suit to some learners, the other may be interesting to different ones. Hess (2001) suggests that "a variety of activities and techniques is important in all learning situations but particularly relevant in mixed ability classes because varieties of tasks can accommodate different levels in our class." Activities should also be aimed at different skills so that learners who do not perform well at speaking tasks may succeed in reading activities or others skills. Last but not least aspect to mention is a variety in groupings - students should work in pairs, groups or individually and the grouping should be often changed.

Pace
Correct pacing is another important principle when working with a mixed ability class. It is not easy to establish a correct pace in a classroom. Right pacing is a result of a long observation. Teaching a class too slowly or too fast can destroy a positive atmosphere and will lead either to boredom or frustration of some students (Hess 2001 p. 9). Each individual in a class has a different working pace. Depending of course on number of slow or fast students in a class, Hess would suggest teaching a class at pace of faster or stronger students in order to prevent them from getting bored and on the other hand, extend their knowledge of English language as much as possible during a lesson. With slower students teacher can work individually, explain to them problematic aspects, and pay more attention to their individual needs

Interest
Once the class loses interest, it will result in de-motivation, distraction, using mother tongue etc. Often it is exhausting and time-consuming to come up with interesting activities for each lesson. Nevertheless, it pays out, since there are situations where language might not be interesting to students, but the content of the activities will hold their interests and keep them participating (Ur Penny 1991 p. 306). The activities which are likely to be entertaining and challenging for students are those which require expressing students' opinions, ideas and experiences, those which boost students' curiosity, which are controversial, not stereotypical or relates to current issues in the society, and those which are competitive.

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Collaboration

Collaboration means working together and cooperating. Rees & Gareth (2010) suggests that students who work together will participate, learn how to compromise, negotiate meaning, become better risk takers and self-evaluators. Working together supports learner autonomy, because students will learn not to count on teacher all the time but rather figure out the unknown expression on their own. They can learn from each other and share their opinions and experiences, which will lead to increasing their tolerance and awareness of people's differences. Students will not only learn a language, but also moral abilities, such as respect of each other, willingness to help and support each other rather than laugh at someone's failure.

Individualization

Individualization is perceived differently by different authors. Whereas Penny Ur describes it as "allowing learners choice in what tasks and materials should students use and how", Luke (1992) describes it as "providing opportunities for students to work at their own pace, in their own style and on topics of their choosing". She suggests several ways of promoting individualization, such as portfolios, self-access centers, individual writing or personalized dictionaries. For private language school courses, it is a vital idea to allow students to help to decide what will be studied and why. This enables students to feel like equal partners with a teacher and supports establishing of positive rapport.

Personalization

Rees & Gareth (2010) suggests adapting and designing materials allowing students individual responses wherever possible. It is important for students to feel as individuals, whose opinions and ideas are taken seriously. Personalized tasks arouse students' interest, because they are based on something they have experienced and therefore they will always have something to say about it.

Open-endedness

Open - ended exercises allow student to respond to tasks and questions which have a variety of possible answers rather than a single correct one. Usually the text book exercises calls for very specific answers that is why it considerably decreases students' participation. Open ended exercises allow students to use their language skills in order to complete a task. This is why they work well in mixed ability classes.

According to Hess (2001), examples of open-ended exercises:

Giving students the beginning of a sentence and asking them to finish it in an appropriate way

Giving students number of questions and allowing them to answer any number of them

Brainstorming

Writing their own definitions of words

Matching answers where several matches are acceptable as correct answers

Questions that may be answered in many different ways

Compulsory plus optional tasks

The strategy of compulsory plus optional tasks allows students to choose what quantity of tasks they want to complete - the class is given a material and told what the minimum that everyone has to complete. The rest of the task is optional. Therefore everyone is kept engaged all the time and can feel a sense of achievement when completing a task. This strategy is especially suitable for designing tests.

Adapting materials

Since text books materials are designed for particular language levels and do not allow much flexibility, it is often necessary to adjust them to the actual level of students, either make them easier or challenging. The same is true for the extra activities to be used in a classroom - it is important to prepare easier versions for slower students, or more challenging one for early finishers.

Homework

Homework is a powerful tool not only for developing learner's autonomy, because it forces students to use the language outside the classroom, but it also helps students to remember subject matter covered in the lesson as well as practices it (Heinle, 1992, p.144). There are several issues connected with assigning homework. The first is how much homework to set. Students at universities have other subjects to work for, and English may need not to be at their preference. If students have English lesson from day to day, it may be difficult to prepare for the English class, as they have other duties to accomplish. Similarly, for adult learners attending language schools, homework may be difficult to complete because of the lack of time. Adult students go to work, have

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families, and other hobbies. This logically results in them not having time to spare and often their reluctance to finish homework. To make homework more pleasurable, it is important to explain the purpose of homework to students. At first, as Harmer (1998, p.338) suggests, teachers need to discuss with students how much homework the can cope with, given the other commitments they have. Often, students find homework boring. This may be preceded by discussing what homework students would like to get. In consequence, teachers may opt for more enjoyable homework oriented towards students' preferences.

Pair work and changing partners

Many communicative tasks are based on pair work. Variety in pairings is the key in mixed ability classes (Rees 2010). Although there are students who doubt the effectiveness of pair work, especially because they do not feel to be exposed to real English, pair work is important because it encourages peer teaching and tolerance of each other.

One can pair strong with strong, weak with weak, or strong with weak (Rees 2010). One should also be sensitive to the general relationships between different students and take notice to who works well with whom .In many classes, teachers usually pair strong with strong, because it is the most beneficial for them. The weakest students they pair with the stronger ones, too, so that they can lead them, but it is obvious that there is no benefit for the strong, that is why they change the pair each lesson. If there is a number of students, they work with the weakest ones. However, to avoid boredom, pairs should be changed regularly, so strong ones are not always with weak ones. For some activities they group weak students separately from strong students so weaker students are not dominated or inhibited by stronger ones. At the same time, stronger ones are more challenged and can push each other more.

they often divide students in pairs purposefully. From time to time they ask students to work with their partners on the left or right side. For random pairing, they use activities which are described in a practical part.

Giving clear instructions

In the class, where there is such an uneven language level of students, it is vital to give clear instructions especially for weaker students to be able to follow the class. Try to simplify instructions as much as possible. Sometimes it is vital to note down key instructions before the class as a part of lesson preparation. Accompany giving instructions by gestures, use synonyms or paraphrase. Ask stronger students concept checking questions to check back on the instructions and let them explain the task in native language for the others if necessary. Introduce activities, which are difficult to explain, in mother tongue to avoid misunderstanding or for time-saving purposes(Heinle, 1992).

Supportive atmosphere

It is essential to create supportive environment in the classroom to increase students' confidence and allow them to perform as good as they are able to. Assume friendly, encouraging and respectful attitude towards students and show "never-ending" patience with weaker ones. Sometimes it is difficult to stay calm and be helpful throughout the whole lesson. Yet teacher believes it is a necessity in order to prevent weak students from getting even weaker. Constantly support weaker students and involve them in classroom participation. Do not disgrace anybody and do not laugh at someone's language failures.

Error correction

Everyone makes mistakes while speaking or writing, even speakers using their own language. Making mistakes is a natural part of language learning development. Learning a foreign language is a difficult process; first, language learners have difficulties in comprehending the task, then analysing the content of the message and finally coming out with a response which is both grammatically and semantically correct. This is a demanding and complicated task during which learners will make number of various mistakes. Teachers then have to choose an appropriate attitude towards correcting students' errors.

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