

*національного педагогічного університету імені Володимира Гнатюка. Серія: педагогіка. 2017. №1. С. 184-1926.*

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## MAKING READING COMMUNICATIVE

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There are many innovative reading teachers who are trying to create reading classes that take into account the whole person. Unfortunately, the typical reading classroom does not lead to meaningful exchanges of information. For students in such classes reading is a solo activity. The only communication that occurs is that of teachers giving instructions and then imparting the correct answers to the students who scribble an x across a wrong answer and circle the correct answers. In many cases, the students do not know why an answer was incorrect. Reading becomes a chore that involves bending one's head to the page and inputting unknown words into an electronic dictionary. This need not be the case. Many of them aforementioned innovative reading teachers are using collaborative reading techniques that motivate students. Students can actually read and complete reading assignments in pairs and small groups. While doing so, they are teaching and learning from each other. This process is empowering, stimulating, and educational.

### ***Weaknesses of the Typical Reading Class***

There are numerous activities that can take place in EFL reading classes. However, two pedagogically inefficient routines for teaching reading to students are commonly used in Japan. One starts with teachers assigning students to read a text and then waiting for students to finish reading it. There is no communication between students. Sometimes, students, again individually, answer a few pre-reading questions or do another short activity which helps students activate a reading schema [7, pp. 340-363]. In many textbooks, a reading text is almost always followed by a series of questions described as «comprehension questions» even though those questions tend to be more tests of memory than of actual textual comprehension. At the end, the teacher

### ***Categories of communicative activities in classroom***

Usually communicative activities fall into four broad categories: (a) the conduct of the English Reading class; (b) topics arising from and relevant to the students' personal life; (c) substantive topics which are educationally or professionally significant; (d) communicative classroom exercises, i.e. small-scale activities that enable students to practice characteristic features of English discourse, especially «pair work», «group discussion», «role play» are frequently used [1, pp. 44-58].

#### ***Strategies for communicative reading***

One of the things to bear in mind when lesson planning is that classroom reading is not the same as real reading. Classroom reading aims at helping students develop the skills they need to read more effectively in a variety of ways (the same variety of ways as they can employ in their own languages, of course). To enable this we plan 'pre-reading', 'while-reading', and 'post-reading' stages. These stages can help us make reading more communicative.

#### ***Pre-reading tasks***

Pre-reading tasks often aim to raise the readers' knowledge of what they are about to read (their schematic knowledge) as this knowledge will help them to understand the text. This raising of awareness is most effectively done collaboratively. Some of the useful Approaches include:

- Tell your partner what you know about the topic
- Do a quiz in pairs to find out what you know about the topic
- Look at some pictures related to the topic
- Skimming the first paragraph for gist and then predicting.

When reading in a class it is good to use schematic and linguistic knowledge to predict content (both related to the topic and the language itself). In class, predictions can be communicated to colleagues, of course [3, p.7]. Some examples of what predictions can be based upon include:

- A title
- Visuals
- Knowledge of the author
- A skim of the first paragraph
- A set of keywords from the text
- Reading the end, predicting the beginning.
- Reading the middle, predicting the beginning and the end.

#### ***While-reading tasks***

Although reading is often a solitary activity and the idea of 'reading in pairs' seems odd, reading can be collaborative. Approaches include:

Running and reading: this approach especially lends itself to scanning as the idea is to encourage the students to read as quickly as possible in a race.

1. Divide the class into student A and student B pairs. Student A sits at one end of the classroom.

2. Stick the text to be read on the wall at the other end of the room.

3. Give student A a list of questions.

4. Student A reads the first question to student B who has to run down the classroom to find the answer in the text, and then run back to dictate the answer to student A, who then tells B question 2 and so on.

5. The first pair to answer all the questions wins. (I ask the students to swap roles halfway through so everyone gets a chance to scan).

#### ***While-reading tasks leading into post-reading tasks***

Jigsaw reading is an old favourite but perennially effective.

1. Divide a text into two parts or find two (or three) separate texts on the same topic.

2. Students A get one text and a related task, students B get the other text and task.

3. Students A complete their tasks in a group. Students B likewise. Compare answers in A & B groups.

4. Students get into A & B pairs and tell each other about their tasks.

Creating a class text bank: I encourage students to bring in interesting texts that they have found (perhaps as a homework task using the Internet) which can be submitted to the class text bank. For weekend homework each student selects a text to take away which they then discuss with the student who originally submitted it. This is, of course, what readers do in real life [6, pp. 86-100].

Exploiting graded readers: this is a good way to help with detailed reading since this implies reading for pleasure. I have used two approaches:

1. Using a class set of the same reader so that everyone reads the same book. This leads into class discussions of what everyone has read.

2. Students read different books and then recommend their book (e.g. by writing reviews) to their colleagues.

Exploiting students' written work: I often put students' written work up on the walls for the others to read. Tasks can include guessing who the author is, voting on which is the most interesting, selecting some for a class magazine.

#### ***Post-reading tasks***

As mentioned above, telling someone about what we have read is a very natural reaction to a text [5, pp. 3-7]. I have already mentioned a few in connection to 'while-reading' (e.g. recommending readers to the class) but other ideas I have used include:

- Discussions about the text
- Summarising texts
- Reviewing texts
- Using a 'follow-up' speaking task related to the topic
- Looking at the language of the text (e.g. collocations).

To conclude, classroom management, different topics, field of discourse and various tasks can present students with a rich variety of communicative events to react to. Implementing communicative activities in comfortable reading classroom will provide more opportunities for subconscious assimilation, and open more channels of communication to the target community at a personal level of contact. Not only teachers but also students will benefit a lot from such activities.

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**THE USE OF INTERACTIVE EXERCISES AT ENGLISH LESSONS**

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Among the advanced methods in the modern educational process of learning English, much attention is paid to interactive methods based on a person-centered approach to the student, aimed at developing not only the creative potential of the learner, but also the ability to think and react quickly, improving communication skills.

The organization of interactive learning involves the use of didactic and role-playing games, modeling life situations, creating problem situations.

Interactive exercises are divided into four groups depending on the purpose of the lesson and forms of organization of students' activities: interactive technologies of cooperative learning, interactive technologies of collective – group learning, technologies of situational modeling, technologies of discussion questions.

At each stage of the lesson a variety of interactive technologies and exercises can be used:

«Brain storm» is an interactive technology of collective discussion, widely used to develop several solutions to a particular problem. Brainstorming encourages