



SELECTING CLASSROOM TECHNIQUES OF AUTHENTIC MATERIALS IN TEACHING READING

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Reading is a vital skill required to develop students understanding of the English language. It's really important that you get your students reading as soon as possible because this is a skill that will prove integral to their everyday lives should they ever choose to live in an English speaking environment. For example, if a student is travelling in another country they may need to be able to read a timetable, a road sign or even the instructions for their new bicycle. Students will need to develop a plethora of skills including understanding the key concepts of a piece of literature and effectively scanning their text (finding appropriate information without in-depth reading). When choosing practice texts try to choose topics which students are already interested in. General reading activities: When teaching students to read English you will still need to ensure that student talk time is high. Activities are a great way to do this and they will help you to work out how much students have understood from the text they have been reading.

We consider that authentic materials as any materials that use language to



communicate information and meaning (Thomas, 2014). This description opens up a wealth of possible resources, most of which are free and easily accessible on the internet or perhaps in our everyday lives.

There are some key questions to consider when selecting authentic materials to use for students. What concept, skill or language structure will students practice? How do I want my students to be able to use language, and how will this resource help them learn or practice? What is the language proficiency level of the students? What support will they need in order to access the content of the materials? What topics are interesting to students? Do the students interact with English in their everyday lives? If so, in what contexts or settings do they use English?

Thinking about the answers to these questions will help you select materials that will allow students to practice targeted language skills, interact with English in a meaningful and relevant way and maintain a high level of interest and motivation.

Instructional materials are regarded as effective materials depending upon the techniques the teachers use. Good techniques or methods the teacher use will characterize the good materials (Richards, T 2001). Accordingly, the appropriate use of material and method will determine the quality of language teaching (Richards J,C and Rodgers,T,C 2002) as they said the quality of language teaching will improve if teachers use the best available approaches and methods (Richards,J,C and T,C Rodgers, 2002). With the belief that there is no best method to use the materials (D ,Nunan, 2003; H,D Brown, 1995), different teachers will come up with different techniques to use one material.

As mentioned earlier, different teachers will use different techniques to use one material. The differences to the use of various techniques are influenced by several factors. *Firstly*, the teacher factor covers teacher's teachings skills and subject matter and contextual knowledge (Richards,T 1998). Teacher's teaching



skills are practical ways of conducting instruction in any situation based on pedagogical reasoning skills and decision making. The second important factor is the subject matter and contextual knowledge of a teacher. The subject matter knowledge refers to what teachers need to know about what they teach, and how the practice of language teaching is shaped by the contexts in which it takes place (Richards, T 1998). *Secondly*, the techniques should be based on what the materials can offer (McDonough and Shaw, 1993), which among others are choices of topics, skills covered, proficiency level and grading of exercises. From those features mentioned above, then the teacher will get the idea on how the materials are used. In addition, the availability of teacher's guide will also help the teacher with the suggested techniques provided along with the materials although it is not must for teachers to follow the techniques suggested by the materials. The teacher, in this case, personalizes the materials about using the techniques who should think it will be the appropriate technique to use.

Thirdly, learners' factor becomes the next factor the teacher must consider to use one particular technique. The learners' factor includes learner characteristics, class size, and physical environment in the classroom (McDonough and Shaw, 1993; 83). In detail, the teacher must carefully see learner's proficiency level, learner's learning style (Grant, 1987), and learner's motivation (Brown, 1994).

By referring to those three factors above, the teacher considers using one particular technique, and this consideration may change from the techniques suggested in the lesson plan (Jensen, 2001) due to the fact that, according to Richards (1990; 37) summarizing from several sources, teaching is not static or fixed in time but is a dynamic, interactional process of interaction in which the teacher's "method" results from the process and the instructional tasks and activities over time.

Subdivide your technique into pre-reading, during-reading, and after-reading phases. Build in some evaluative aspect to your techniques (2001; 313-316). Teachers can also help improve student reading skills and comprehension through



instruction of reading strategies. Predicting, making connections, visualizing, inferring, questioning, and summarizing are strategies shown by research to improve reading comprehension (Block & Israel, 2005). It is important to teach the strategies by naming the strategy and how it should be used, modelling through the think-aloud process, group practice, partner practice, and independent use of the strategy (Duke & Pearson, 2005).

Predicting. In order to be a good reader, learners should set a goal for their reading, therefore good readers have a purpose for reading. One strategy for improving comprehension is predicting, which helps the reader set a purpose for their reading. Research has shown that good readers use their experiences and knowledge to make predictions and formulate ideas as they read (Block & Israel, 2005). This strategy also allows for more student interaction, which increases student interest and improves their understanding of the text (Oczkus, 2003). It is important to compare the outcome in the actual text with the prediction process as it will lead the learner to improve his understanding. Without this aspect of the prediction processes, it becomes meaningless to improving students' comprehension. (Duke & Pearson, 2005). Some of the approaches for teaching predicting are teacher modeling, predicting throughout the text, with a graphic organizer, or using post-it notes throughout the text. Using the title, table of contents, pictures and key words is one prediction strategy. Another key prediction strategy is to have students predict at specific points through the text, evaluate the prediction, and revise predictions if necessary (Teele, 2004).

Visualizing. Another strategy that the good readers employ when comprehending a text is visualization (Adler, 2001). Visualization requires the reader to construct an image of what is read. This image is stored in the readers' memory as representation of the reader's interpretation of the text (National reading Panel, 2000) Teachers can motivate students to visualize settings, characters, and



actions in a story and ask them to make drawings or write about the image that come to their minds after visualizing the text.

Making Connections. Making connections is another strategy that can be used in the reading process. By making connections, the learners can activate their prior knowledge and connect the ideas in the text to their own experiences. Reading becomes meaningful when the reader connects the ideas in the text to their experiences and beliefs and things happening in the outer world. their experiences and beliefs and things happening in the outer world. Text-to-Text, Text-to-Self, Text-to-world to help students make connections. Students can make text-to-self connections through drawing, making a chart, or writing. Students can make text-to-world connections through drawing, making a chart, writing, or graphic organizers. Text-to-world connections could be done by comparing characters in a story to characters today or comparing the content of the text to the world today (Teele.S, 2004). Giving a purpose to the students' reading by asking them to find connections would help them comprehend the ideas better in the text.

Summarizing. The process of summarization requires the reader to determine what is important when reading and to condense the information in the readers own words (Adler C.R, 2001). During summarizing process the students will be able to distinguish the main ideas from supporting ideas. Distinguishing the related knowledge from the unrelated ones is another point in the summarizing process which will students' capacity to increase text comprehension. Summarizing is a strategy which helps the students to organize the ideas even in the long reading passages which are usually perceived as threat for the students.

Questioning

Readers can use the questioning before, during, and after reading. The questioning process requires readers to ask questions themselves to construct meaning, enhance understanding, find answers, solve problems, find information, and discover new information (Harvey & Goudvis, 2000). In this strategy, students



return to the text throughout the reading process to find the answers to the questions asked by the teacher before, during and after the reading. By this strategy, students practice to distinguish between questions that are factual, inferred or based on readers' prior knowledge. By using the student generated questioning strategy; text segments are integrated and thereby improve reading comprehension (NRP, 2000).

Inferring

Inferring refers to reading between the lines. Students need to use their own knowledge along with information from the text to draw their own conclusions (Serafini, 2004). Through inferring students will be able to draw conclusions, make predictions, identify underlying themes, use information to create meaning from text, and use pictures to create meaning (Harvey & Goudvis, 2000). Students can be given techniques to use illustrations, graphs, pictures, dates, related vocabulary and titles from the text to make inferences. Finally, it is important for teachers to know characteristics of good materials as they use the materials for the students. It is also noted that no matter good they are, they may still fail to predict what actually happens when the material is used (Harmer, 2001; 301). Through knowing characteristics of good materials, therefore, it is expected that it equips teachers to choose and use the materials and the students to choose the materials to work on based on their needs and interests.

Skimming

Skimming is a reading activity which means quickly going through the text to find out the gist of it. Grellet (1981, p. 19) defines skimming as,

a more thorough activity which requires an overall view of the text and implies a definite reading competence." When skimming, we go through the reading materials quickly in order to get gist of it, to know how it is organized or, to get an ideas of the tone or the intention of the writer.

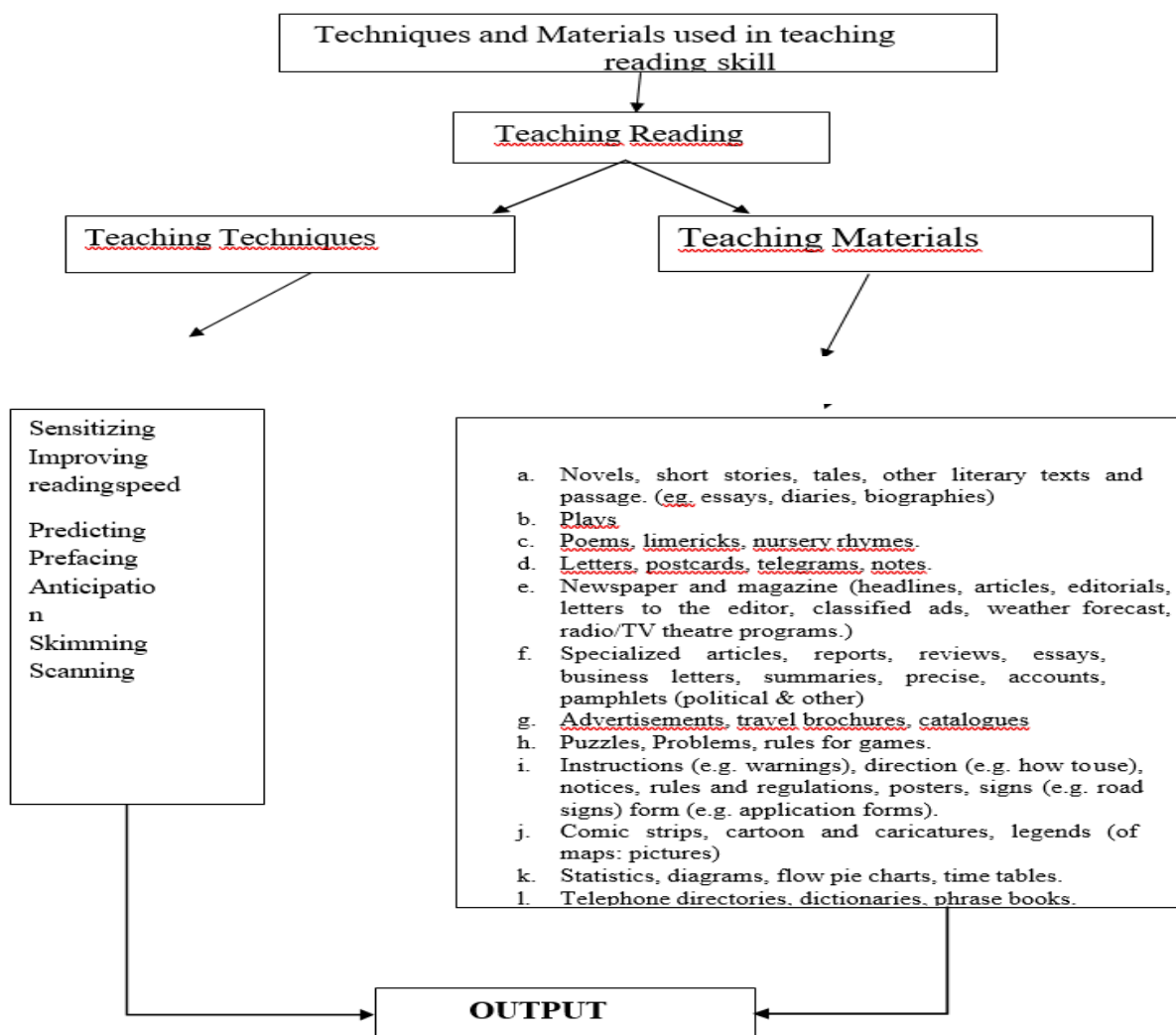
Scanning



Scanning is a strategy of reading that refers to the rapid survey of a text to find out particular piece of information. Grellet (1981, p. 19) defines scanning as,

Scanning, on the contrary, is for more limited since it only means retrieving what information is relevant to purpose. When scanning, we only try to locate specific information and often we do not even follow the linearity of the passage to do so. It is said that reading is a silent and personal activities which does not imply that it only lends itself to individual work. On the contrary, it is particularly interesting to encourage comparison between several interpretation of a text which will lead to discussion and probably a need to refer back to the text to check.(See the Figure 2

Figure -1





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