

WHY AND HOW EXTENSIVE READING IS APPROPRIATE IN THE CLASSROOM LEARNING?

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Abstract: Extensive reading is the beneficial activity for enhancing life-long learning. It develops language competence by making use of language inputs drawn from extensive reading. Learning skills also increase as it strengthens comprehension, predicting, and analyzing skills. If it is institutionalized policy it will be good practice for increasing learning capabilities, not only learning language. This article presents the reasons why extensive reading is beneficial for boosting learning skills. It also completed by the suggested activities to be implemented in the classroom.

Keywords: Extensive reading, Classroom learning

INTRODUCTION

Extensive reading has been suggested by many experts in the efforts of increasing reading capability. "Reading is central to the learning process" (Latha, 1999 – p 12). It has close relationship with how memory works. Memory is, one of facilities of learning, a process of several steps (Christison, 2002 – p 4), they are processes of stimuli, short-term memory, thinking and processing information. Then the information is stored in long-term memory. These memories can be elicited by using procedural pathway, emotion, and semantic memory.

CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

Procedural memory is beneficial for repeated actions. These actions are enhanced by drilling or repeating actions and words to get automation. This capability depends merely on the frequency of drilling and training. The more we drill the better competence will be mastered.

Emotion is the paramount device to remember events. Positive emotional experience in the classrooms will trigger out memory easily. It means enjoyable atmosphere in the classroom helps students to learn more effectively.

Semantic memory is the most crucial pathway in the second and Foreign language learning. This pathway is useful for learning new vocabulary, grammar rules, or exhibit language performance.

Furthermore, our five senses are also play important role in retrieving memory. They can select information and the process it to be stored as information in our mind. The process takes, might be, in the speed of light.

Thus the application in the classroom learning might be better to understand how students learn. Teachers can create multitasking jobs, fear-free atmosphere, meaningful activities, personal service for the students, tactile/ hands-on activities, and sustainable learning. These activities are favorable for propelling learning process.

It has been explained that reading and learning process can be accommodated. Thus the discussion is about the role of extensive reading and suggested practical activities during reading class.

METHOD

The discussion will be focused on the role of extensive reading in language learning and suggested learning activities that might be able to be implemented in the classrooms.

❖ **The role of extensive reading in language learning.**

Many studies have shown that reading can have a beneficial effect on second language learning, but relatively few of these have focused on extensive reading in classroom environments over a period of time (Al-Homoud, F. 2009). The description below will provide the explanation of why extensive reading is beneficial to intensify L2 learning.

1. Extensive Reading provides immense input.

Reading materials intensify second language acquisition process of the learners because they provide language exposure, interesting materials, and relax learning atmosphere. Second language acquisition process is the process of learning additional language after learners acquired their mother tongue (Ellis, 1989, p 5). In this process, language exposure is significant factor in attaining second language. These exposures are valuable inputs for the learners in mastering second language competence.

Reading materials are interesting for the learners for the reason of learners have freedom in choosing their favorite reading topics. When learners look on this kind of reading, they will do 'adventurous experience' during their reading activities. In this stage, they encounter with the second language exposure that are exhibited during the reading process. Since the reading material is interesting, the new and various language exposures can be absorbed in positive mental condition. That makes learning process is effective.

It might be another reading material advantage because learners learn language in their pace. It means they are more relaxed in processing and internalizing the language input supplied by the text of reading material. So during their learning process, the atmosphere is tension-free which is conducive for learning (Christison, 2002). This is good to accommodate the storage of long-term memory process.

2. Extensive Reading propels language competence.

Reading activities, especially reading aloud, facilitate learners in automaticity of word recognition, decoding the symbols (Grabe, 1991:391) and (Pam, 1996:38), and drilling word pronunciation. Word acknowledgment and detecting the symbol is one way of comprehending reading text through bottom-up process. Usually, it is applied to train novice readers.

3. Vocabulary building gained by extensive reading

According to Nagy and Herman (1987) the great part of vocabulary inventory gained from reading. This capability is acquired through silent reading. Extensive reading has great possibility to assist learners in acquiring vocabulary. By having many experiences in creating meaning through many and various reading materials, learners get many examples of applying the new vocabulary in authentic materials. These are great vocabulary inputs for the learners.

The four learning strands (meaning-focused input, meaning-focused output, language-focused learning, and fluency development) - suggested by Nation, 2006 - provide a structure by which to integrate intentional and incidental vocabulary learning. (Norbert Schmidt, 2008). Meaning-focused input is the activity that focused on acquiring vocabulary through listening and reading. It will work best when there is about 95% coverage. Too many unknown words will make readers find difficulty in comprehending the reading passage.

4. Extensive reading strengthens earlier learned language.

The previously learned language stored in the memory is potentially reinforced and recombined by reading texts. The reading text provides stimuli to the learners for recycling the stored learned language and they process it by combining the new input in order to get new understanding about the language.

5. Confidence building increased by extensive reading.

Traditionally reading activities in the classrooms exploit short reading texts. Sometimes the content of reading text does not cater for student need. Whereas, EFL students require reading longer texts or even textbooks in their study field so study skill is a need. Extensive reading is able to assist learners being confidence in comprehending longer texts.

6. Extensive reading develops prediction skills.

Prediction skill is part of comprehension skill that is a blend of readers' prior knowledge, information presented in the text, and the use of context to assist recognition of words and meaning. These can be acquired by extensive reading. Elley and Maghribi in 1981 did a research in Fiji about extensive reading. The result showed that extensive reading increased reading proficiency and general language proficiency including listening & writing. Prediction skill is important in understanding the reading text. It is supported by the research done by Nishom, 2007. It was reported that extensive reading increases reading strategies and motivation. If we examine the consistency of the research finding in a long duration of time, it can be assumed that extensive reading is beneficial in developing prediction skills.

7. Extensive reading motivates learners to read.

The frequencies of reading activities make learners have strong motivation in reading. Grabe, 1991 argued that "students need to read extensively. Longer concentrated periods of silent reading build vocabulary and structural awareness, develop automaticity, enhance background knowledge, improve comprehension skills and promote confidence and motivation." (p. 196). This engagement makes readers motivate in comprehending reading text. Language expose encountered by readers will sharpen the readers to acknowledge vocabulary and sentence structure. By extensive reading, students are trained in subtle way to develop automaticity by making use of background knowledge that is useful for improving comprehension skills. This process will end up strengthening self-confidence. Finally, the direct effect is the readers become highly motivated learners.

◆ Suggested learning activities.

Considering the potential power within reading activities, EFL teachers have great chance to make use of these activities to boost the student English competence.

IMPLEMENTATION

In classroom implementation, there are possible actions that can be carried out to enhance learning. Basically these suggested activities are activating student participation, creating enjoyable learning atmosphere, and promoting risk-taking action.

1. Maximize learners involvement

Handoyo Puji Widodo, 2010, stated that extensive reading can empower students to be fluent readers who draw connections between reading and their own lives and, in the process, make new information a part of their own knowledge or schemata. Students' involvement is a good way to enhance learning process. In this activity students are able to explore their capability and perform it to the class. They are take active participation during learning process in the classroom.

Students can show that they are successful in catching the main idea. That is the basic capability of reading comprehension. Then, they are instructed to compare the reading content with the reality in their daily life. Further stage is the ability to discuss the new information from the

reading content based on their schemata. The ultimate ability is analyzing the author ideas based on the syntax and semantic point of view.

2. "Reader interview" activity

This activity is to elicit the dormant knowledge of the students. In this activity teacher can use interview technique to get oral expression of their opinions. The questions are directed to the definition of what reading is and the advantages of reading, and how good readers do with reading. Suggested questions are:

- * What is your definition of reading?
- * What do people do when they read?
- * When you're reading and you come to a word or something or you don't know what do you do? Do you do anything else?
- * Who is a good reader that you know?
- * What makes him and her good readers?
- * Do you think that they ever come to a word in a story that he/she doesn't know when they are reading? Yes- When they come to a word they don't know, what do you think they do?
- * If you knew someone was having trouble reading, what do you think you would do to help them?
- * Would you do anything else?
- * How did you learn to read? If someone helped you, what did he/she do?
- * What would you like to do better as a reader?
- * What do you think you can do to better yourself as a reader?
- * Do you read for pleasure every day?
- * How often and how long do you read for pleasure?

3. Reading aloud activity

Reading aloud helps your students develop the language skills that they will use in school and throughout their lives. Reading to young children promotes language acquisition and literacy development and, later on, achievement in reading comprehension and overall success in school. The percentage of young children read aloud daily by a family member is one indicator of how well young children are prepared for school. In particular, a mother's education is consistently related to whether or not children are read to by a family member.

Children in families with incomes below the poverty line are less likely to be read aloud to every day than are children in families with incomes at or above the poverty line. Thirty-eight percent of children in families in poverty were read to every day in 1999, down from 46 percent in 1996, compared with 58 percent of children in families at or above the poverty line, which is down from 61 percent in 1996. (Source: *Family Reading*. NCES Fast Facts. National Center for Education Statistics, U.S. Department of Education.)

4. Student presentations

Paraphrasing is restating or explaining ideas in your own words while retaining the meaning and ideas in the original selection. Retelling captures all of the main ideas with most of the supporting details. Paraphrasing helps young readers check their own comprehension. These are suggested questions for promoting students presentation.

- * How can you put these facts into your own words?
- * Which words capture the main ideas from this selection? How can you use the list of key words to make your own fact statements?
- * If you wrote the key ideas as a grocery list, how would you compact the text? Which items are essential in the list? Which items can be omitted?
- * What was your purpose for reading? Which details matched your goals? Which details were irrelevant to your purposes for reading the article?

* What questions did you want answered in the text? What answers were revealed?

5. Maintain positive atmosphere

Student behavior can make or break the environment in a classroom. No matter how much effort a teacher puts into lesson planning, poor student behavior can ruin everything, pulling teacher attention from the objectives, and diverting student attention, as well. For the teacher, this is one of the most draining elements of the profession. Rather than be consumed with correcting misbehavior, a helpful strategy for maintaining a positive classroom environment is to recognize and reward good behavior.

Positive reinforcement is preferable, in that it promotes a positive learning atmosphere. Although serious discipline issues must be dealt with and negative reinforcement seems inevitable, emphasis on positive response to good behavior helps to promote further instances of good behavior. However, positive reinforcement must be meaningful, or it will have negative repercussions.

To maintain positive learning atmosphere teachers can give reward. One of the is material rewards. Many teachers use material goods as rewards for good behavior. It may be as simple as stickers, pencils, or other inexpensive, but fun and attractive, items. Used with great discretion, this can be a part of rewarding good behavior. However, the danger in overusing this strategy is developing a mentality of entitlement in the students. If materials are tied to behavior, and the student sees the selection of choices as uninteresting or unnecessary, there is a likely possibility that the desired behavior will be exchanged for poor behavior. Don't jelly bean your students to death, in other words. Make prizes for behavior a rare treat.

Reward can also be in the form of certificate. Periodic recognition of students for good behavior can assist in maintaining a positive atmosphere. A weekly recognition of "outstanding citizen" in the class, with a relevant certificate, works as an inexpensive reinforcement of good behavior.

Another technique for maintaining positive learning atmosphere is Leadership Rules. Recognizing good behavior in the classroom can happen via the assigning of leadership rules. A student who exhibits respect, for example, might be assigned to help with the lunch count for the next week. If the leadership position is desirable, it is more likely to elicit appropriate behavior. If it's a despised leadership role being offered, it will not result in improved behavior.

Teachers can also communicate with parents. One of the most effective ways of reinforcing good behavior is communicating with a student's parents. This may be a note to be hand carried by the student. It may be sent by mail. A teacher might want to take the time to call the parent, and follow up by letting the student in question know that the parent was called, and why. Teacher contact with parents is too often associated with negative behaviors, or poor grades. Teacher initiated contact over good behavior takes most parents and students by surprise. Making this a regular practice can add significantly to a positive classroom experience.

Setting up Cooperative Learning Groups is recommended. An essential element of cooperative learning activities is the emphasis on group behaviors. When students work together on an activity, interactions may be unpredictable. In explaining the activity to students, a teacher will generally indicate which social skills are going to be noticed. For example, on a given day, the teacher may be observing good manners. While the activity is in progress, the teacher will be commenting aloud as the desired behavior is observed. "Group X is doing a nice job of using good manners in discussing the passage." The behavior is reinforced through casual, positive commentary.

Classroom Management is also key point in creating positive learning atmosphere. In a classroom setting, a student's name is more often used in a negative context. This puts students on alert, when they hear their names, that they are being observed for something bad. A teacher can remove this stigma by making it a practice to use student names in a positive context. Making an effort to include the student's name in a positive context is a simple way to reward, or reinforce, good behavior. Praise is an effective tool, but make sure that it is valid, not manufactured just to make a student "feel good".

extrinsic motivation is an effective tool for rewarding behaviors, but its overuse can dilute its impact. The goal in educating students is to move from the need for extrinsic motivation, to the prevalence of intrinsically motivated good behavior. Keeping the material motivations limited, and using a good mix of praise, varied responsibilities, and parent communications, a teacher can reward good behavior in such a way that students and class move toward a more frequent display of those desired behaviors.

6. Making use of audio-video materials

Audio materials encompass examples of pronunciation, tone, pitch, and speed that are advantageous in encouraging reading comprehension. Students have both reading text and then listen to the audio materials. It means students have exposure to the correct pronunciation of the words written in the text. Acquiring the right pronunciation make students realize that different pronunciation resulted in the meaning change.

Video materials, in this discussion, mean audio-visual materials. This teaching aid makes students much easier to comprehend reading material. Pictures and sounds presented in the video both creating intense learning atmosphere and speed up comprehension. Pictures are much more effective than word explanation.

7. Discourage using dictionary excessively

A study was conducted in order to determine the usefulness of an American college desk dictionary (a monolingual English dictionary for native-speakers) used by English as a Second Language (ESL) students when taking a vocabulary test. Seventy-four advanced ESL learners were selected from sections of an English composition course for international students. The students were divided into three experimental groups. Group 1 selected equivalents for a test item on a multiple-choice test by using only the monolingual English dictionary. Group 2 read a short story that included the tested vocabulary, after reading the story, Group 2 took the same multiple-choice test without the aid of any dictionary. Group 3 read the short story with the tested vocabulary and used the monolingual English dictionary while taking the same multiple-choice test. A statistically significant difference in the test scores was found between Group 3 and the other two groups, indicating that dictionary use that supplements the use of contextual cues is beneficial. No statistical difference was found between Groups 1 and 2, indicating that dictionary use without a supporting discursive context provides no measurable advantage over inferring or guessing the meaning of a word within a written discourse.

A review of the relevant literature concerning second language dictionary use while reading suggests that selective dictionary use may lead to improved comprehension and efficient vocabulary development. This study aims to examine the dictionary use of Japanese university students to determine just how selective they are when reading nonfiction English texts for general comprehension. The findings suggest that high-intermediate and advanced learners are often selective when considering whether to look up a word. However, a third of the participants in this study were judged to have used the dictionary excessively. In addition, a quarter of the words looked up in the study were neither essential to the articles' main points nor frequent or useful words, according to corpus research. It is concluded that some learners might benefit from training in selective dictionary use.

CONCLUSIONS

The conclusions that might be able to be drawn are extensive reading:

1. develops language competence as the readers get enormous language exposure. It enables the learners to acquire language inputs from their reading.
2. improve learning skills since extensive reading is the beneficial activities to enhance comprehension, predicting, and analyzing skills. All of those skills are useful for activating learning skills.

3. can be institutionalized policy for it is good practice for increasing learning capabilities, not only learning language.

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