

## 1. INTRODUCTION

In today's world, one of the most important ways to get the information with members of other countries is via reading. Successful students must spend great deal of time reading various types of literature related to their study. Krashen (1993) provides an overview of research indicating that learners who read avidly experience gain in reading comprehension, vocabulary development, and writing ability. Since reading is not an easy skill to master, the teaching of reading must be programmed in such a way in order to help the students understand the reading material well. By giving them the reading techniques such as skimming and scanning techniques, the students can consequently reduce time spent in reading by one half time (Berty & Ross, 1990:249). In teaching reading comprehension it is found that it very beneficial to assign tasks to students in the form of journals to help them with the opportunities and challenges these texts present. It is crucial, however, that the task journals be properly designed and integrated into the reading course. This paper will look at the design, implementation, and integration of a task journal that is designed to: 1) stimulate students' thinking about the texts, 2) promote reflection on the reading process, 3) give students practice with a practical strategy for vocabulary building, and 4) serve as a basis for assessment of students reading.

## 2. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

### 2.1. The Reading Comprehension

Reading is the process of constructing or developing meaning from the printed text (Cooper et al, 1988:3). It means that a reader must be able to see a connection of some kinds of between what he/she knows (prior-knowledge) and what he/she reads in the text or a book he/she is reading. Reading is also the most important skill for students to learn, because their success or failure in school or in society depends on their ability to read. Successful people engaged in business or professional occupation spend great deal of time reading various types of reports. According to Ruddell (1993:35) the most common goal of reading is comprehension, the instruction of meaning that in some way corresponds to the author's intended meaning. In school, however, the reading has three goals:

1. Learning : Students read not only to understand the text but to extend their knowledge in subject areas as well.
2. Increasing Reading Skills: At each grade level the students are expected to become better readers and to read increasingly difficult texts.
3. Application: Throughout middle and secondary grades, the students are expected to apply knowledge constructed from reading text.

### 2.2. The Importance of Reading Comprehension

The ability to comprehend the reading text is very important. Reading is the dominant skill in learning any subjects, because the ability to read is not only the performance to pronounce the passage, but also the comprehension of the written message. Therefore, comprehension refers to understanding, i.e. understanding the thought of the writer (Rubin, 1993:136). According to Gunning (1992:188) comprehending of the text is an interactive process between the

readers' prior knowledge of the text. The readers understand more or less about they read according to what they already know.

The achievement in reading comprehension is very important. Students need to understand what they are reading because reading occurs when a reader is able to attach meaning to the words. One has the ability to comprehend what he or she is reading if he or she has the ability to bring the meaning to the printed page. In summary reading and comprehension cannot be separated because the main purpose of reading is comprehension.

Brown (1987:32) discusses four important elements of reading comprehension. They mainly deal with vocabulary, specific information, main idea, and ability to infer or imply or the ability to gain meanings that are not explicitly stated in the text of reading materials. Since the major of reading instruction is to foster in each student the competence to understand the printed language, the ability to read for information requires the application of fundamental comprehension skills. In addition, the content of what is read also makes some demand upon the comprehension.

### 2.3. Task Journals

Teachers commonly assign some basic record-keeping tasks in the form of a reading log or reading record for students to show how many pages they are reading per week. Some teachers also find it useful to ask students to write a summary of or personal reaction to what they have read. This is not only useful to ask students better understand and appreciate what they are reading. In addition to record-keeping and comprehension-based tasks into the journals to help students in two other areas where they have considerable needs: reflection on the reading process and vocabulary development. In the section that follows the writer provide a short description of each of the tasks in the journal and a brief explanation of their use.

### 2.4. Task Journals Design

The task journals use in teaching reading includes basic record keeping as well as five tasks : Summary, Prediction, Opinion, Reflection, and Vocabulary work (Bray, 2002:7)

#### A. Summary

The first task is for students to write a short summary of what they have read. Summary writing is a tried and tested activity in reading classes. It requires students to think about what they have read and condensed into its essential.

#### B. Prediction

The second task, Prediction, follows the summary task and asks students to consider the story as it has unfolded and imagine what might happen next. The prediction process requires students to use their background knowledge as it relates to the story.

**C. Opinion**

The third task, Opinion, requires students to think about what has happened in the story and to write what they think or feel about it. Whereas, the first two tasks focus on the text itself, the opinion task focuses on the readers' reaction to the story. This task requires the reader to consider the themes presented in relation to his/her own situation, values and beliefs.

**D. Reflection**

The fourth task asks readers to move beyond the text and their reactions to it and to focus on the reading process itself. By asking students to reflect on how their reading is going, and in particular, the level of difficulty they are experiencing, students are led to consider why a particular section is easy or difficult.

**E. New Words**

The fifth task requires students to take notes on new words they encounter that they feel are important enough to try to remember.

Below are the items that are included in the task journal

Date :

Book:

Pages:

1. **Summary** ( Write a short summary of what you have read).
2. **Prediction** (What will happen next)
3. **Opinion** (Give your opinion about what you have read)
4. **Reflection** (How is your reading going?)  
Circle one : Easy    OK    Difficult
5. **New words** ( What new words do you want to remember?)

**3. DISCUSSION**

The problem of the reading material is one faced by all teachers of English (Long and Richard, 1989:24) state that in choosing teaching materials, the teacher should follow three principles: interest, familiarity, and suitability. It also means that reading materials which will be used should be interesting, familiar and suitable for students. Carrel and Eiserhold cited in Long and Richards (1987:220) support that " The subject of reading materials should be of high interest and relate well to the background of the reader. " Learning to read a

second and foreign language is best accomplished when the reading materials are based on the real life experience that are meaningful to the learners (Dixon and Nessel, 1983:12)

Task journals are designed to: 1) stimulate students' thinking about the texts, 2) promote reflection on the reading process, 3) give students practice with a practical strategy for vocabulary building, and 4) serve as a basis for assessment of students reading. (Bray, 2002:8)

The success of a class has with task journals depends to large extents on how well the journals are integrated into the reading course. Initially, it is important to explain to students why they will use task journals, what are the purposes of each task is, and how to do each journal task. The following are the procedures (Bray: 2002:9)

With general directions students should be able to begin their journals. The first task, summary writing, is particularly difficult, and students often write too much or too little. At the beginning it is a good idea to give students focused practice with summary writing by having them all read the same section of a text and summarize it in a short paragraph. The teacher can then ask selected students to write their summaries on the board and analyze them together in class or the teacher can collect and make copies of a few summaries to work with in the next class to clarify what a good summary is. The other four tasks can be dealt with in a similar fashion, one per week.

It is important to collect the journals with in the first few weeks to check that they are being done correctly. After that the teacher asks students to bring them to every class, and, either the teacher checks to see that they have been done or read them carefully, depending on my class duties. It is also important for teacher to consider the amount of time students are spending on the journal and to advise students if they are writing too much or too little. The journal is designed to stimulate thought about the text and reflection on the reading process itself and, therefore, should add to the reading experience, not become burdensome and detract from it. With practice, journal writing will become easier and requires less time.

One final point is that the students like to see the teacher's comments on the their journal entries, so it is a good idea to do this as much as possible. It is also good to use the journals as the basis for a quick chat with students about the books they are reading.

#### 4. CONCLUSION

Reading is one of the most important skill for students to learn, because their success or failure in school or in society depend on their ability to read. Successful people engaged in business or professional occupation spend great deal of time reading various types of reports. Since reading is not an easy skill to master, the teaching of reading must be programmed in such a way in order to help the students understand the reading material well. By giving them the reading techniques such as skimming and scanning techniques, the students can consequently reduce time spent in reading by one half time. One way to teach reading comprehension is by using task journal that is designed to: 1) stimulate students' thinking about the texts, 2) promote reflection on the reading process, 3) give students practice with a practical strategy for vocabulary building, and 4) serve as a basis for assessment of students reading.

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