



Tikrit University

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English Department

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How to teach reading Pre_ reading activities.

1-Theoretical background to how to teach reading skills

2-Concept defining: what is reading

3-Schema theory

4-Cognitive processing: Top-down vs. bottom-up processing

5-Intensive vs. extensive reading

In the classroom: how to teach reading .

How to teach reading – principles

In addition, many things are involved in the reading process. To start with, we proceed to read a text, not like a tabula rasa; we are not empty vessels. Readers have prior knowledge that helps them fill the gaps while reading a text.

"Reading is a process of constructing meaning from written texts. It is a complex skill requiring the coordination of interrelated sources of information" (Anderson, Hiebert, Scott, & Wilkinson, 1985, p. 6. Cited in Stanley, 2007).

Schema theory

Schema theory tries to explain how readers utilize prior knowledge to understand and get new information from the text (Rumelhart, 1980). The theory claims that written text does not carry meaning by itself. It only guides readers to retrieve or construct meaning from the structures or patterns of this prior knowledge. These structures are called schemata (singular: schema).

A text about transportation, for example, would trigger our schematic knowledge about the different types of transportation.

Schema theory is closely related to two other important notions, namely top-down and bottom-up processing.

Cognitive processing

Top-down vs bottom-up processing

Top-down processing refers to the use of background knowledge to predict the meaning of the reading or listening text. For example, readers develop hypotheses about the content of a text, which they have to confirm or reject while reading. The uptake of information is thus guided by an individual's prior knowledge and expectations. Bottom-up processing, however, relies on the actual words or sounds. That is, students construct meaning from the most basic units of language, including letters, letter clusters, and words.

Teachers, who encouraged bottom-up processing, emphasize the decoding skills. They are not concerned with guiding learners recognize what they, as readers, brought to the understanding of the text.

Intensive and extensive reading:

A distinction is made in the literature between two forms of reading: intensive and extensive reading.

Intensive reading involves the deconstruction of a text. The aim is to get as much information as possible. By reading intensively, we are concerned with every detail related to the text. The learner is encouraged to deal with vocabulary and grammar activities to get a closer understanding of the text.

Extensive reading, however, refers to simply reading as much as possible, without concerning oneself with every detail. Occasional unknown words are not supposed to get too much attention because focus is on the overall meaning. That is to say, extensive readers look up words only when they deem it absolutely necessary to their understanding of the text.

Pre-reading activities are designed to prepare students for the text they are about to read, activate their prior knowledge, generate interest, and build anticipation for the content. These activities can help students

develop a context for understanding the text and improve their comprehension skills. Here are some examples of pre-reading activities:

Brainstorming: Encourage students to brainstorm ideas, words, or .1 concepts related to the topic of the reading. Write their responses on the board or on a flipchart to create a visual representation of their prior knowledge.

Prediction: Have students look at the title, headings, and any .2 images or graphics related to the text. Ask them to make predictions about what they think the text will be about based on this information. Discuss their predictions as a class.

KWL Chart: Use a KWL chart (Know, Want to know, Learned) to .3 help students organize their prior knowledge and questions about the topic. Have students list what they already know about the topic, what they want to learn, and what they have learned after reading the text.

Vocabulary Preview: Introduce key vocabulary words from the .4 text before reading. Provide definitions, synonyms, antonyms, or examples of how the words are used in context. This helps students understand and engage with unfamiliar vocabulary when they encounter it in the text.

Anticipation Guide: Create a list of statements related to the .5 themes or ideas in the text, some of which are true and some of which are false or debatable. Have students read the statements and indicate whether they agree or disagree with each one. Discuss their responses as a class.

Picture Walk: If the text includes illustrations, photographs, or .6 other visual elements, do a "picture walk" where students preview the images and discuss what they see. Encourage them to make predictions about how the visuals relate to the text.

Activate Background Knowledge: Engage students in a brief .7 discussion or activity to activate their background knowledge on the topic. This could involve sharing personal experiences,

discussing relevant current events, or watching a short video clip related to the topic.

Think-Pair-Share: Pose a question or prompt related to the text .8 and have students think silently about their response. Then, pair students up to discuss their ideas with a partner before sharing their thoughts with the class as a whole.

Skim and Scan: Teach students how to skim and scan the text .9 quickly to get an overview of its structure, main ideas, and organization. Model this strategy and provide guidance on what to look for during the pre-reading phase.

Pre-reading Questions: Provide a set of guiding questions .10 or prompts for students to consider before reading the text. These questions can help focus their attention on specific aspects of the text and prepare them to actively engage with the content.