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THE IMPORTANCE OF TEACHING READING

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ВАЖНОСТЬ ОБУЧЕНИЯ ЧТЕНИЮ

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In the present paper the authors has made an attempt to analyze peculiarities of teaching reading methods in the light of foreign language acquisition and English teaching methodology.

В настоящей статье авторами предпринята попытка проанализировать особенности обучения чтению, методы в свете обучения иностранным языкам и методика преподавания английского языка.

Reading is one of the key language skills that students should acquire in the process of learning a foreign language. Moreover, it is not only the goal of education but also a means of learning a foreign language as while reading students review sounds and letters, vocabulary and grammar, memorize the spelling of words, the meaning of words and word combinations i. e. they polish their foreign language knowledge. Over years, students who learn English as a Foreign Language face the need to develop their reading abilities in English.

What do teachers do to teach reading effectively?

Komiyama (2009) claims that as English language plays a great role in international enterprise, science, World Wide Web, beginners and advanced level students feel the necessity of enhancing their reading skills. Because reading is so important teachers all over the world have worked out different approaches which are designed to develop learners' reading skills. For example, Hui - lung Chia (2001) notes that the readers are active participants who can make contributions to the organization of meaning of the material they are reading. Komiyama (2009) points out that teachers should change their traditional view to teaching reading to contemporary methods which are based on strengthening student's motivation.

Challenges in Teaching Reading

Reading is a problem not only for the learners of foreign language, but also for native speakers. Komiyama (2009) indicates that reading demands much time and willing to work hard. Ono, Day and Harsh (2004) indicate that the presence of great number of unknown words can be challenging for students and this is a problem for teachers either because it demotivates students.

The Role of Motivation in Teaching Reading

Motivation is a bridge to success in reading. Productive approaches and techniques, interesting topics, appropriate tasks, cooperative work and encouraging feedback help teachers to increase motivation for reading. According to Komiyama (2009), two main

types of motivation are intrinsic and extrinsic types. An intrinsically motivated student, as the author states, read for enjoyment and this willing is based on student's own desire. Ono et. All (2004) argue that assigning students with reading logs help them [students] to set personal aims on reading certain number of books in week, a month, and following to these personal schedules are example of successful motivational factor. Mickulecky and Jeffries (2004) claim that students treat reading for pleasure as a less essential part of the reading process. Nevertheless, students can gain a great deal of helpful knowledge exactly from reading for pleasure. The author suggests asking students to bring their books in class to read them there, giving home work connected to pleasure, checking their comprehension by asking questions and assigning presentations on their reading etc. Komiyama (2009) states "intrinsically motivated students read because they find it interesting or enjoyable" (p.33).

Approaches of Teaching Reading

Nowadays there are a great number of techniques that aimed at improving reading skills. Baker (2008) investigates an integrated approach that unites methods from "different perspectives" (p22). The author claims that any research on reading techniques will contain long discussion about two opposite approaches of teaching and reading. The first approach is the whole language approach to reading which is based on the theory that all the learners can guess the meaning of the text with the help of a process which is called "psycholinguistic guessing game" (p23). The second approach is the phonics approach which is based on a "skill based approach" when learners begin language learning with alphabet letters and phonemes (p23). However, there is another approach which contains two of these approaches and is called the integrated approach. Ono et. Al claims that some teachers do not give reading because they use "no reading pain, no reading gain" approach (p13). They argue that this is the wrong approach because they think that the more learners read the more they speak fluently and become successful learners. Chia (2001) suggests a top- down approach in which readers predict the meaning text with the help of their background knowledge. Abu Rass (2002) claims that he has worked out a booked -based program that helps to improve students' writing skills through reading literature in English. The author indicates that he has approbated this integrated course at BeitBerl College where he works. Despite of much material for reading students showed good results in tests that were held to check its effectiveness. They read the assigned works with a great pleasure even if there were many unknown

words for them. Integrated reading and writing course meets the requirements on reading, writing, in class activities, and encouraging feedback. Ellinger, Sandler, Chayen, Goldfrad, and Yarosky (2001) explored incorporating using the Internet with reading in English. They argue that the Internet is a useful instrument which supports developing reading.

Improving Student's Reading Skills through Reading Comprehension.

Baker (2008) considers comprehension related to reading as an understanding of the material which was read and considers it as the most important aim of reading. He suggests seven strategies to develop students' reading comprehension: comprehension monitoring, cooperative learning, use of graphic and semantic organizers, question generation, question answering, story structure, and summarizing. Ono et. Al (2004) claim that students' improvements in reading will extend their reading comfort zones and teachers should help them to enlarge these zones. Thus, teachers can check students' general comprehension by integrating extensive reading activities. The authors argue that students will be able to overcome difficulties that they had at the beginning by reading many books.

Working on vocabulary while Reading

Vocabulary is the knowledge of lexical units and ability to use them in order to communicate. Baker (2008) states that reading is one of the ways of enriching vocabulary. However, he acknowledges that while reading students face difficult words and phrases that can cause problems with further motivation for reading. Bricout (1999) points out that while reading many texts students have to cope with unknown words. She suggests that teachers consider building understanding, coping with new words, and strengthening student confidence in order to help students read effectively.

Using Activities while Teaching Reading

Abu Rass (2001) suggests that such activities as discussions, accompanying reading with writing paragraphs can improve reading skills. Bricout (1999) claims that an activity with text with missing words improves grammar and communicative skills. Chia (2001) describes three types of reading activities: semantic map, questioning and previewing. A semantic

map is an activity to activate students' knowledge before reading the text and information learned from the text. Questioning is a post reading activity which involve questions to be provided after reading. Previewing is another pre-reading activity which can improve English.

Komiyama's (2009) paper is the most relevant research in teaching reading effectively. She maintains that students encounter greater difficulties at the lessons where traditional approaches are used. She suggests that teachers apply new reading strategies for developing student's reading skills. Her ideas made us consider which modern techniques are being used by practicing teachers. Ono et. Al (2004) underlines the role of teachers in the reading process and gives wide-ranging recommendations for enhancing students' skills in reading.

All the things considered, reading is a language activity and ought not to be divorced from other language activities. To read effectively in English second-language students need to learn to think in English. The methods of any teaching reading lesson should be chosen according to the learner's level of skill development. Teaching reading is a job for an expert who has to create conditions whereby learners can learn and develop their reading skills.

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