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Suggested Title: Using Reading As an Interactive Medium in the ESL/EFL classroom

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Suggested Category: Teaching Technique and/or Lesson/Lesson Plan

One-Line Description of Your Article: Practical lesson plan/teaching technique for ESL/EFL classrooms. This article takes reading theory and applies it practically in a classroom.

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Abstract

Reading has been long believed to be one of the mediums through which language acquisition can be facilitated. Researchers such as Stephen Krashen (2004) have thoroughly researched the benefits gained through reading, particularly in the field of language acquisition, and have consistently found that reading enhances students' ability in not only expand their lexicons, but also furthering grammar development. This article bridges theory and classroom practices by providing ESL/EFL instructors with a way to make reading fun and alive in the classroom. In the spirit of this article, the title of this lesson is called *Reading Alive!*

Introduction

Often times, difficulties are experienced by instructors when teaching English as a foreign language, particularly when reading is involved. Reading materials may be too difficult in terms of level or they may lack the enthusiasm of a conversation class; some may be nothing more than text on pages. So how can teachers transform a reading class into an interactive environment that will facilitate learning? Moreover, what tools can help with this transformation? This article answers these questions.

The idea of reading having a place in EFL curricula has been long contended by researchers such as Krashen (2004) and Terrell (Krashen and Terrell, 1983). Krashen (2004) has posited that students who read different print media acquire meanings of words through context clues alone; grammar is learned intuitively rather than through explicit instruction. *Reading Alive!* incorporates both contextual meaning and explicit instruction into its lesson.

Step 1: Choosing appropriate materials

The first step of *Reading Alive!* is to choose print material that is of appropriate level and interest to students. In this particular context, print material is defined as material which can be read and discussed in class and is readily accessible. Books, magazines, and news articles from online sites such as www.cnn.com, www.msn.com, www.bbc.com, and www.scholastic.com/kids are wonderful sources from which material can be gathered.

Step 2: Choosing, filtering, and defining vocabulary

Having chosen what the class will read, the instructor then creates a comprehensive list of vocabulary words that may be unfamiliar to the students; the list should have no more than 10 words. The instructor must be wary not to inundate students with too many new

vocabulary words as this may inadvertently cause them to be overwhelmed, consequently resulting in an increase in students' affective filter. It is vital that the instructor incorporate known vocabulary words into the list of new vocabulary words. By doing this, the vocabulary list will be perceived as easy by the students. As a result, the new vocabulary will be quickly learned by the students. The final list of words should have definitions next to them along with at least 2 example sentences per word. The following is an example of how words should be presented to students:

kicking (verb) – the action of your foot hitting an object

Ex. She is kicking the ball.

Ex. The boys are kicking the tree.

The process of defining vocabulary words and writing example sentences may seem tedious. However, this concern is easily allayed by the usage of edhelper.com. Through this site, instructors can input vocabulary words and have the website generate a list of approved definitions and example sentences. Teachers can then choose which definitions and examples to use for each word.

Step 3: Starting the class

Once the list of vocabulary words has been created and distributed to the class, the instructor will then review the list with students. This is where several different paths can be taken by the instructor. Instructors can either call students to the front of the classroom and have them act out the words (e.g. the word 'kick' would be shown by a student kicking the air) or they can give students the handouts created through edhelper.com and place examples and definitions on PowerPoint slides which can then be reviewed by the class and instructor.

Step 4: Introducing the text, discussion, and reinforcement

After reviewing the vocabulary words, the instructor introduces the text; interrogatives are used heavily during this session. The introduction should be no longer than 2 minutes and include the main idea and conclusion of the text.

Once the introduction of the text has been completed, students read silently for approximately 5 minutes. Then, the instructor reads the text while students repeat. Upon completing the assigned readings, reflection should transpire. The instructor then asks questions such as "what was the story about?", "why did "X" happen?", and "when did the story take place?" in order to facilitate dialogue; students are required to give responses in complete sentences. .

The length of text used in *Reading Alive!* will vary depending on the amount of students in the class and total class time. Ultimately, what is best for the class is decided by the instructor.

Review

In closing, here are 9 easy steps that should be followed when implementing *Reading Alive!*:

1. Choose text appropriate to class level, size, and interest
2. Make a list of words with the following known word to unknown word ratio: 2/3
3. Create handouts that contain the definition of the target word and at least 2 example sentences per word (can be done by using edhelper.com or through a word processing application)
4. Distribute the handouts to the class
5. Review the vocabulary found in the text by either role-playing or via PowerPoint
6. Introduce the text
7. Have the students read silently for approximately 5 minutes
8. Read and have the students repeat after the instructor
9. Discuss the story and use the new vocabulary words during class discussion

Works Cited

Krashen, S. (2004). *The Power of Reading*. Portsmouth, NH. Heinemann.

Krashen, S., & Terrell, T. (1983). *The Natural Approach: Language Acquisition in the classroom*. Hayward, California: The Alemany Press.

Biography



Rafael Sabio is an Assistant Professor at Yonsei University in South Korea. He has been teaching EFL in South Korea for almost 4 years. During his spare time, Rafael enjoys writing, weight lifting, and spending time with his wife. His professional interests lie in EFL pedagogy, creating practical lessons that can help his students enjoy learning

English, and the online delivery of TESOL education to professionals in the field of TESOL.