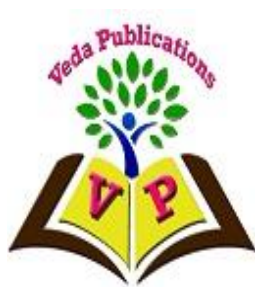




RESEARCH ARTICLE

**METHODOLOGY OF TEACHING READING ENGLISH AT
UNDERGRADUATE LEVEL**

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Teachers generally like silent reading classrooms, seeing the quiet is indicative of actual learning taking place. This may be true in many cases, but there are certain drawbacks to these quiet reading classes. Sometimes, students do not cooperate and they do not even focus on the given task. It becomes really difficult task for teachers to assess whether the learning is taking place or not in the class room. Ultimately, these quiet non interactive classrooms may hamper the learning interest of students. This paper presents different methods of reading to be adopted by teachers to inculcate successful reading skills to students at the undergraduate level. This paper further stresses on knowing the students level of understanding which is the focal point for the selection of material.

Keywords: *Communication Skills, Intensive Reading, Extensive Reading,*



INTRODUCTION

For students, the Intermediate level is not only crucial to get the direction about the future professions; it is also an important phase of development to master other needed skills, such as communication skills. Cultivating Reading at this level is very beneficial to them. Techniques of reading should be taught and all types of Reading should be cultivated. A.L.Kohli differentiates Intensive and Extensive Reading as follows:

Intensive Reading or critical reading is done while we are trying to gather facts or arriving at some conclusions from facts, before us, already supplied or collected. Extensive Reading is also known as wide reading which is based on a large varied field from where; we have to gather the desired information, or our survey or report.¹

Therefore, Intensive reading involves concentration and is generally applied to the text to read with a serious purpose. It is a concerted effort to concentrate in order to achieve a study goal. It also helps the reader to arrive at a certain conclusion of his conceptions, which are based on facts that are gathered from varied sources. Intensive reading has to be followed by exercises to be done by the students. On the other hand, lectures have a vital role in encouraging Extensive reading by helping them locate various available sources of material. In this way, Extensive reading helps the students to read more books and other materials like journals, magazines and newspapers to improve their grasp and information on a specific subject.

Intensive reading is restricted to reach a pre-positioned goal of gathering only particular information. As E. Williams says, it is "slow reading" directed at complete understanding. Mostly, Intensive reading is done to study the material; study goes in between the lines. As the reader is slow in his eye-movement, he could comprehend the point of the writer, theme of the essay, sub-themes in support of the main ideas. And he could also guess the inference of the writing. This type of reading is to be introduced into the classroom situation. This activity is to be taken in between the reader and the lecturer. Hence, the degree of comprehension of the student could be easily appraised by him. Intensive Reading task is used for study skills. This strategy tests the level of understanding of the student. The purpose of this reading should be made clear to the students. Time is a significant factor in Intensive reading. The instructor or the teacher acts as an organizer to see that the students read on their own and give them "space" to do the activity. Lecturer's interference should be reduced to the minimum. They are not supposed to disturb the students during the activity. Reading activity includes questionnaire which makes an important tool for the students to find the information and check their answers.

Extensive reading demands the skill of fast reading; the purpose of it is to gather more information as also to derive pleasure. This process does not put the reader under pressure to absorb whatever he reads, as there is no restriction on time or content or close supervision on the reader. Extensive reading comprises reading a wide variety of materials such as newspapers or novels or any other stuff that does not demand total



concentration. This may include reading for pleasure, besides gathering wide range of materials for knowledge. Extensive reading helps students relatively to improve their overall comprehension skills. It also gives them wider active and passive vocabulary. The outcome or product of extensive reading is students' word recognition and for their overall improvement as readers. The goal of this activity is pleasure of the student who is interested in extensive reading programme. These types of programmes can be provided in the libraries of schools/colleges. Each school/college can get a library of books. There are two types of libraries; one is static library and other is mobile library in which books can be moved in boxes and trolleys. All these procedures demand money and time. But the schools/colleges are to be persuaded to raise money for this type of activities. Hence, it is imperative to promote extensive reading and, to do this; the educational institutions should establish good libraries.

Lecturers are the catalysts to motivate Extensive reading. The fact is that lecturers who themselves belong to espousal of reading as an esteemed occupation should feel the need to guide the students to benefit themselves in extensive reading programme. Parents or lecturers could only suggest the genre of books like adventure, humour or scientific fiction or romantic novels and the selection should be made by the students as to what type of material they would like to read depending on their individual aptitudes and interests.

EVALUATION

Evaluation of any English course should strictly adhere to the principles of language testing

which are elaborately given by the ELT experts. Any testing should focus on the skills and not on the content. Further, only the items which enhance the proficiency in the productive skills should be tested. For example, grammar should be taught as the basis of writing and not for its own sake or just to give information about the language. The principle here is that the teachers should teach language and not about language. So only the items that enhance the skills should be tested. The international test papers could be used as models to prepare the question papers of General English and Communication Skills subjects.

SUPPLEMENTARY MATERIAL

Any English class in India at any given level is heterogeneous because of the disparities in the backgrounds of the students – educational, economic, regional and linguistic. To build the bridge between the expected entry behaviour and the real achieved level, the teachers should provide supplementary materials. It is the teacher who is in direct contact with the students that can choose the appropriate supplementary material to bring in uniformity in the academic levels of the students. So it is imperative that all the English teachers are given training to prepare their own materials to teach different skills of the language.

On the status of English, the Anglo-Indian nominated member of the Parliament, Frank Anthony made an historical statement on 24th April, 1959, underscoring the relevance of English language to India:

Mr. Frank Anthony made a fervent appeal in the *Lok Sabha* today. For the inclusion of



English in the 8th schedule of the Constitution. Speaking amidst frequent interruptions on his resolution asking the government to take necessary steps to include English in the eighth schedule of the Constitution, Mr. Anthony made it clear that the resolution had nothing to do with the question of the official or national language. Its object was to see that Hindi which was to be the national language and which was to be enriched by the 14 languages mentioned in the Eighth schedule was also enriched by English.²

Currently the technical and professional courses are taught in English in Andhra Pradesh and elsewhere in India. Without general reading skills at the primary and high school level, it is unwise to expect specific or technical skills at higher level of education.

The Committee of parliament official languages has recommended that after 1965, when Hindi becomes the principal official language of the Union, English should continue to be used for such purposes as may be specified by parliament by law and for as long as necessary. The Committee has expressed its 'definite opinion' that adherence to the constitutional settlement, which envisages the replacement of English by Hindi or Union purposes and by the various regional languages for the official requirements of the states, is 'the only safe and practicable course to adopt'. India has a composite culture and it is but appropriate that its variety should find expression through the languages which are in use, and its unity should be reflected in a common language it said.³

The recommendation obviously conveys that it was felt that English is a common language or the *lingua franca* of the nation. Hence, it should be a serious concern to the academicians and the respective State and Central governments to initiate concrete steps to strengthen the English language teaching in all technical institutes. Students of polytechnic course who become diploma engineers play a crucial role. They assume the role of interlocutors between the unskilled or skilled workers and the technocrats or the engineers. Their comprehending skills in reading English should be enhanced so that they could read and implement the blue prints of the technical projects and also become engineers/ technocrats through lateral entry into engineering courses.

CONCLUSION

Those students who are not exposed to English medium become diffident psychologically and fail in comprehension of the content subjects also. Students must be given counseling by the qualified counselors who study psychology as one of their subjects. Self-motivation and steps to acquire comprehensive skills are also necessary to make the vernacular media students to stand on the higher pedestal in the competitions. Psyche of the students must be taken care of. Otherwise, the language problem affects the other comprehensive skills of content subjects which are offered through the medium of English. They fail to get the concepts in the content subjects. If they fail to understand the content, they develop diffidence which may ultimately turn them out to be failures or dropouts. Hence, it is the teachers who should play the role of mentors and guide them towards studies.



Every individual has intelligence and the imaginary layouts; but the practicality of bringing out the potential is different and difficult. Reading creates a progressive and productive independent thinking of an individual who will contribute to the development of intellectual and social dimensions of global community.

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