TEACHING EFFICIENT READING IN
A COLLEGE ENGLISH CLASSROOM

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Abstract
English has not only become the international language as it is spoken by a large number of native speakers of other languages and severs as a language of wider communication but also has achieved a genuinely global status owing to its special role recognized in every country. Under such circumstances, greater importance has been attached to English teaching of which reading has been given some privileges at the tertiary level in China. Hence, it is very essential for language teachers to have a good understanding about how to teach reading in a College English classroom. This article discusses what reading is and the important issues in teaching reading and gives some proposals for how to teach reading efficiently in a College English classroom. Aiming to give an idea that reading can be learnt effectively if students are motivated, exposed to English language and given chances to use English.

Key words
reading, efficient reading, motivation, Schema Theory, cognitive strategies, learning strategies, metacognitive strategies, social strategies

The subject matters of English language teaching

English is the most widely taught and spoken language the world has ever known. Kachru (1992) has not only become the international language as it is spoken by a large number of native speakers of other languages and serves as a language of wider communication. McKay (2002) but also has achieved a genuinely global status owing to its special role recognized in every country. Crystal (2001) said that under such circumstances greater importance has been attached to teaching English especially at the tertiary level in China. Therefore, it is very essential for language teachers to improve our teaching practice as well as to develop ourselves professionally with the help of these language teaching approaches and methods. This article will focus on how to teach efficient reading in a College English classroom because it enjoys such a high status and has been given some privileges to. For one thing, according to the directions given by the curriculum commission, reading is the focus of the teaching and learning of College English. It is a required twelfth-year length course for all non-English majors throughout China. For another, the College English learners are non-English majors whose major purpose to learn College English is to use it as a tool for getting the information relevant to their special academic fields. Hence, language teachers need to have a good understanding about how to teaching reading in a College English classroom and to do some reflection and the pedagogical performance in our language classroom where the subject matter of English language teaching can be classified under the following two main headings: language systems and language skills. Scrivener (2002) The former include the meaning of the individual words, vocabulary or lexis, how they interact with each other, grammar, how they sound, phonology, or the use to which they are put in particular situations. Scrivener (2002) While the latter include listening, speaking, reading and writing. Scrivener (2002, 201) And among them, listening and reading are called the "receptive skills" that is, the reader or listener receives
information but does not produce it” while speaking and writing are the “productive skills.” Scrivener 2002[20] Coming up next is a categorized table of language systems and language skills.

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2 Definitions of reading

Reading is defined as a complex information processing skill in which the reader interacts with text so as to re-create meaningful discourse. Silberstein 2002[12] Meaning reading and understanding Ur 2000 [13] The view of reading is essentially concerned with meaning specifically with the transfer of meaning from mind to mind[5] the transfer of a message from writer to reader. Nunan 2000[3]

2 Purposes for doing reading

There are so many different reasons for doing reading and that we read in different ways for different purposes Nutall 2000[2] These different purposes are generalized into the following two main categories: we read for pleasure and for information in order to find out something or in order to do something with the information you get. Greilet 2001[4] are to get information to respond to curiosity about a topic to follow instructions to perform a task for pleasure amusement and personal enjoyment to keep in touch with friends and colleagues to know what is happening in the world and to find out when and where things are. Hedge 2000[195]

2 Reasons for teaching reading in a College English classroom

We should teach reading in a College English classroom for the following reasons: First students want to be able to read textsin English either for study or simply for pleasure. Second reading texts also provide good models for English writing. Thirdly reading texts also provide opportunities to study language vocabulary grammar punctuation and the way we construct sentences. Paragraph and texts what is more good reading texts can introduce interesting topics stimulate discussion excite imaginative response and be the springboard for well-rounded fascinating lesson. Harmer 2003[68] Therefore it is possible for us language teachers to help our students learn how to read because reading is learnt Nutall 2000[33] even though the question whether it is possible to teach reading is a debatable one Nutall 2000[1] and to get our students to read English texts is one of the most important parts of a language teachers job. Harmer 2003[68] and our goal to engage our students in a reading program should be to develop fluent independent readers who set their own goals and strategies for reading and who learn aspects of the reading process through reading. Silberstein 2002[12]

2 Skills involved in reading

Reading involves a variety of skills and the main ones are recognizing the script of a language deducing the meaning and use of unfamiliar lexical items understanding explicitly stated information understanding information when not explicitly stated understanding conceptual meaning understanding the communicative value of sentences and utterances understanding the relations within the sentence understanding relations between the parts of a text through lexical cohesion devices interpreting text by going outside it recognizing indicators in discourse identifying the main point or important information in a discourse distinguishing the main idea from supporting details extracting salient points to summarize the text an idea etc selective extraction of relevant points for a text and the basic reference skills: skimming scanning to locate specifically required information and transcoding information to diagrammatic display. Greilet 2000[4]
2.4 Reading skills students should acquire

Skimming a text for the gist of a text and scanning the text for particular bits of information Harmer 2003 [69] are the basic reading skills our students need to acquire. Reading skills need to be fostered so learners can cope with more and more sophisticated texts and task and deal with them efficiently [quickly, appropriately and skillfully] Ur 2000 [147]. And I think to foster our learners' reading skills, the objective for us in teaching reading though it is not so easy for us to reach it. Thus, while teaching reading language teachers should not only persuade our students of the advantages of skimming and scanning but also make them see that the way they read is critically important. Harmer 2003 [69].

2.5 Reading strategies language teachers should teach

We should teach our students the reading strategies such as sensitizing which is subcategorized into making inferences through the context and word formation understanding relations within the sentence linking sentences and ideas improving reading speed and from skimming to scanning which includes predicting previewing anticipation skimming and scanning Grelet 2000 [246] 64.

3. Teach efficient reading in a College English classroom

3.1 Definition of efficient reading

Reading skills the objective for us in teaching reading need to be fostered so learners can cope with more and more sophisticated texts and task and deal with them efficiently quickly appropriately and skillfully. Ur 2000 [147]. But it is not so easy for us to reach the objective so that we have to reflect on the question how to efficiently teach reading in a College English classroom. Efficient reading means using the least effort to obtain satisfactory result that is we want our students to use their time and energy to best effect. Nutall 2000 [44].

3.2 The role of teachers in teaching efficient reading

To teach efficient reading language teachers need to consider the following aspects That is the role of teachers the role of texts and the role of students. When the first aspect is concerned it is necessary that we teachers read a lot ourselves to be reading teachers for both improving our teaching and for setting up a good example to our students. For one thing the best teachers of reading are also reading teachers in the sense that they are teachers who read. Nutall 2000 [229]. For another student readers are made by teacher readers because they follow the example of people they respect and above all that of their teacher. Nutall 2000 [229]. To be reading teachers we need to read both in the target language and in our own mother tongue and demonstrate that we value reading and believe that reading is caught but not taught. Nutall 2000 [229]. Consequently students will follow suit and thus it makes it possible to make good student readers. Moreover we teachers should clearly know that students learn aspects of the reading process through reading that our role in a reading classroom is a facilitator and that our goal is to develop fluent independent readers who set their own goals and strategies for reading. Silberstein 2002 [12]. Finally also the most importantly we teachers should perform some action research the research carried out by teachers on phenomena in their own classrooms on teaching reading because a bit of research may contribute to an examination of similar topics in our own or someone else's stimulate new thinking and lead to significant innovation or further research. Ur 2000 [328]. When it comes to action research we can do some research into the Schema Theory a mental structure Nutall 2000 [7] which suggests that our knowledge and expectations about the world will strongly affect our ability to understand new information by providing a framework within which that new information might fit because the theory is related to bottom-up and top-down processing the two basic modes of information processing and has been used as a theoretical model in several important areas of reading research. Nunan 2001 [257-258]. Consequently we will find answers to the puzzles that we encounter in the process of teaching reading such as what the relationship between background knowledge and linguistic knowledge is why students who are good readers in Chinese have difficulty transferring their skills to English. Moreover we will be able to help our students to understand that learning a language means we use that language to make meaning. Butter Fahey Feez Spinks Yallop 2003 [15].
3.3 The role of texts in teaching efficient reading

Course books offered to our students must be enjoyable because this is a major condition for students to develop their reading habits. Nuttal 2000:131. To sever this purpose, we teachers need to assess the course book very carefully because the way the course book organizes its materials and the kind of activities it promotes can have a profound influence on what happens in the classroom. Cunningworth 2002:97. The following criteria should be taken into consideration for our students. We make while we are selecting reading materials for them: 1) Suitability of content. Nuttal 2000:170. This means that we should consider our students needs and the texts we choose should interest our students preferably enthrall and delight them. Nuttal 2000:170. Because people generally learn languages best when their experience of knowledge of the world interests and feelings are involved. Cunningworth 2002:97. And interesting content makes the learner's reading task much more rewarding. Nuttal 2000:170. Therefore, we should select the reading texts which meet our students specific needs in terms of their special fields and allow students to be themselves as fully as possible. Cunningworth 2002:97. For instance, my students are law majors so that I always choose the relevant reading materials for them to do their extensive reading. 2) Exploitability. This means we use a text to develop our students' competence as readers. A text cannot be exploited is of no use for teaching even though students enjoy it because the focus in our reading lesson is both the meaning and purpose of the text, that is, how language is used for conveying content for a purpose. Nuttal 2000:170. 3) Readability, which means the linguistic level of the selected text suits that of the students. Nutall 2000:131. Because readability refers to the combination of structural and lexical difficulty. Nutall 2000:174. Which is the biggest obstacle for our Chinese students while they are reading. Therefore when we are choosing the reading materials whether we should choose the authentic reading materials or not should depend on our students' linguistic level. For less proficient learners we had better begin with the simplified texts so as to make them appropriate in level for our students to avoid the frustration leading to counter productivity. Ur 2000:150. When students become more advanced it would be sensible to start basing their reading practice on a wide variety of authentic or near authentic texts and on tasks representing the kinds of things a reader would do with them in real life because after all our ultimate purpose is to enable our students to cope with the same kind of reading that are encountered by native speakers of the target language. Ur 2000:150. To draw a conclusion, we should use text books that contain texts which are realistic in terms of the students' reading needs and abilities and which are authentic. Silverstein 2002:101. When it comes to readability, students first of all should be motivate to be the motivated learners who are willing to or even eager to invest effort in learning activities and to progress because learner motivation makes teaching and learning immeasurably easier and more pleasant as well as more productive. Ur 2000:274.

3.4 The role of students in teaching efficient reading

Cook 2000:97. Defines motivation in second language learning as the long-term fairly stable attitudes in the students' mind and he points out that the integrative motivation, which reflects whether the students identify with the target culture and people in some sense or rejects them and the instrumental motivation, which means learning the language for an ulterior motive unrelated to its use by native speakers, to pass an exam, to get a certain kind of job and so on are the two important types of motivation in second language learning and that students will find it difficult to learn a second language in the classroom if they have neither instrumental motivation nor integrative motivation. Cook 2000:98. Hence, motivation should be the important topic for us language teachers while teaching reading because it is very strongly related to learner achievement in language learning. Ur 2000:274. Nowadays thanks to the compulsory Certificate English Test Band 4 a nationwide test for Chinese tertiary students to get their degree, our students are very instrumentally motivated and this contributes greatly to their learning because both instrumental and integrative motivation are important both to students' language learning. Cook 2000:97. Even so, we still need to do something else to increase our students' integrative motivation because integrative motivation is more powerful than the instrumental motivation. Harmer 2003:8. For instance, while teaching reading, the best way to motivate our students is that our choice of the teaching materials and the information content of the lesson should correspond to the motivations of the students. Cook 2000:99. In other words, students should be encouraged to be engaged with enjoyable books which satisfy the criteria of readability, suitability and
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Let us remember that the enjoyable books work as a more powerful motivation than any other kind.Nutattal2000,131 while teaching reading. Besides motivation, students should be trained to acquire and develop good language learning strategies which suit any academic subject. Cook 2000,108 and which refer to the mental processes and operations used by learners to learn and then communicate. Nunan 2001,265 consisting of the cognitive strategies the thought processes used directly in learning which enable learners to deal with the information presented in tasks and materials by working on it different ways. Hedge 2002,78 the metacognitive strategies which involve planning for learning, thinking about learning and how to make it effective self-monitoring during learning and evaluation of how successful learning has been after working on language in some way and the social strategies that is learning by interacting with others such as working with fellow students or asking for the teacher help. Cook 2000,105 Training students to use particular learning strategies will improve their language performance. Cook 2000,105 and help them to be good language learners. Needless to say, students must be encouraged to develop independence inside and outside the classroom through learner training which shades over into self-directed learning. the synonym of learner autonomy. Hedge 2002,77 in which the students take on responsibility for their own learning. Cook 2001,106 but not just passively receive knowledge. Hedge 2002,77.

3 Teaching reading interactively with other language skills

Language is a highly structured interrelated system and consequently it is imperative that language items should be learned in relation to one another. Cunningsworth 2002,102. This applies equally to teaching reading because it is comparatively rare to find courses dealing exclusively with reading. Nunan 2001,267 Therefore, language teachers should link reading to other kinds of language skill. Nunan 2001,267 through the activities chosen. For instance, when we are teaching reading, we should also teach the skills of writing by asking students to summarize and make notes of what they have read. Grelet 2000,8 because reading texts provide good models for English writing by supplying us with the opportunities to study vocabulary, grammar, punctuation as well as the way we construct sentences, paragraphs and texts. Harmer 2003,68. For another example, we can also teach speaking by asking our students to discuss what they have read. Grelet 2000,8 while teaching reading because good reading texts can introduce interesting topics stimulate discussion excite imaginative responses. Harmer 2003,68. Moreover, we can teach listening by providing students with the recorded text of a news bulletin. Grelet 2000,8 to explore the linguistic knowledge the lexis the grammar the phonology and the word knowledge content. Nunan 2001,268 while teaching reading.

4 Conclusion

After the discussion, the author thinks efficient reading will be possible for our students who are motivated exposed to English language and given chances to use English once a clear perspective of what reading is and of reading can be learnt effectively is available.

References


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