

Integrating Strategic Reading in L2 Instruction

Joy Janzen and Fredericka L. Stoller

Northern Arizona University, Flagstaff, AZ

One of the primary goals of second language (L2) reading instruction should be to help students develop as expert, or more strategic, readers. Integrating strategic reading instruction into L2 classrooms requires advance planning on the part of the teacher. Four steps are important in this planning process. The first step involves the choice of a text at an appropriate level of difficulty for the students. The second step requires the selection of strategies for instruction, a choice that is dependent on a variety of factors including student characteristics, the demands of the text, and the goals of reading instruction. The third step in planning necessitates the structuring of lessons and the writing of scripts (i.e., think-aloud protocols) to guide the presentation of strategies. The last step involves the adaptation of instruction in response to student needs and their reactions to in-class modeling, practice, and discussions.

Expertise in reading involves many competencies, including decoding, automatic word recognition, knowledge of vocabulary and grammar, and familiarity with the topic being read. In addition to these competencies, expert readers are also strategic readers, able to command a wide variety of strategies and to use them flexibly and in conjunction with one another (Pressley and Afflerbach 1995; Pressley and Woloshyn 1995). Expert readers use strategies consciously and unconsciously to enhance their understanding and to monitor comprehension; the strategies used may range from local actions, such as guessing the meaning of a word in context, to more global behaviors such as evaluating the text according to the reader's purpose. Research in first and second language contexts has demonstrated that reading strategies can be taught and that students benefit from such instruction. When strategic reading is integrated into instruction, students progress in their abilities to use strategies while reading, they arrive at a richer understanding of text meaning, and their performance on tests of comprehension and recall improves (Carrell, Pharis, and Liberto 1989; Pearson and Fielding 1991; Brown, Pressley, Van Meter, and Schuder 1996). Students also develop a more positive attitude towards reading (Auerbach and Paxton 1997; Jimenez 1997).

One important goal of reading instruction, then, should be to help students become expert, or more strategic, readers. Reading instruction that emphasizes strategic behavior frequently includes the following characteristics:

JOY JANZEN is a PhD. Candidate in the Applied Linguistics Program at Northern Arizona University. She has taught in the United States, China, Czechoslovakia, Romania and Russia. Her interests include the development of strategic readers and teacher education.

FREDERICKA L. STOLLER is an Associate Professor at Northern Arizona University, where she teaches in the MA-TESL and PhD. In Applied Linguistics Programs. She is interested in second and foreign language curriculum development, reading instruction, content-based instruction, and language program administration. She recently co-edited *The Handbook for Language Program Administrators*.