

Teaching Reading Strategies: 'It Takes Time!'

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Studies in L2 reading have shown that reading strategies not only can be taught to students, but that when learners use strategies they have learnt, these help improve their performance on tests of comprehension and recall. There are many suggestions about how strategy instruction should take place in the literature on L2 reading, but few studies have been conducted on how teachers actually implement strategy instruction in their classrooms. This paper outlines a case study of how one teacher attempted to incorporate strategy training in his secondary school English reading classes. He attempted strategy training in questioning, clarifying, and predicting strategies and vocabulary recognition techniques for less proficient English students with mixed success. The teacher was successful in getting his students to achieve some metacognitive awareness of their reading processes. As a result it seems that strategy training for ESL/EFL readers is worthwhile. However, teachers, especially EFL teachers, should modify their expectations of achieving rapid success. Additionally, teachers may need specific instruction on how to implement strategy training more effectively.

INTRODUCTION

Research in second/foreign language (L2) reading suggests that effective reading strategies can be taught and that students benefit from such instruction. Strategy training as it relates to L2 reading means that successful reading mainly depends on appropriate strategy use and that learners can improve their reading comprehension by being trained to use effective strategies. Strategy instruction develops student knowledge about the reading process, introduces students to specific strategies, and provides them with opportunities to discuss and practise strategies while reading (Janzen and Stoller, 1998). Although there are many suggestions in the literature on L2 reading as to how strategy instruction should take place (eg. Janzen and Stoller, 1998; Winograd and Hare, 1988), few studies have been conducted on how teachers, in reality, implement strategy instruction in their classrooms. This paper outlines a case study of how one teacher attempted to incorporate strategy training in his secondary school English reading classes.

READING STRATEGY TRAINING

Learner strategies are tools that enable learners to take on responsibility for their own language learning (Wenden, 1985). The main objective of language learners using specific learning strategies is for them to solve learning problems and thus become autonomous language learners. Wenden and Rubin (1987), among others, have suggested that learner strategy training consists of first listing descriptions of strategies of successful language learners in the form of typologies and then training

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