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READING ACTIVITIES IN THE CLASSROOM

Summary. The article deals with reading as one of the aspects in teaching ESP. Special attention is paid to pre-, while-and post-reading activities in the classroom. The reasons for using fiction in teaching ESP have been identified; the main pre-, while-and post-reading activities in the classroom have been outlined and analysed. A variety of activities that can be used in the classroom have been given and classified.

Key words: pre-, while-and post-reading activities, fiction, teaching ESP, vocabulary, content.

Reading fiction plays an essential role in English for Specific Purposes (ESP) development. Reading strongly influences formation of the language skills and also the whole personality of the student. Fiction is believed to enhance language learning, create a positive atmosphere in the classroom and give the feeling that language learning is instructive and enjoyable.

The **aim** of this article is to study pre-, while-and post-reading activities of using fiction in teaching ESP. To reach this aim we will fulfil the following **tasks**: to identify the reasons for using fiction in teaching ESP; to outline the main pre-, while-and post-reading activities; to classify and analyse a variety of activities that can be used.

The **subject** of the research finds itself in the investigation of different pre-, while-and post-reading activities and tasks in using fiction in teaching ESP. Keeping this in mind, let us examine what kinds of pre-reading activities can be organized. Focusing on what learners will have to do, we can outline the following groups of activities:

- 1) *activities based on questions;*
- 2) *activities using vocabulary items;*
- 3) *activities based on listening.*

Activities based on questions. Asking questions is a useful activity and we frequently use it. However, a good question must be probing and thought-provoking so that it encourages students to justify their responses. In addition, it must focus their attention and encourage observation, invite enquiry and stimulate discussion. It should be productive and make students seek a response and generate more questions [1, p. 46]. Therefore, to our mind, open-ended questions are the best option particularly for upper-intermediate and advanced level students. We believe that the following activities using questions are well suited for the pre-reading stage.

Using heading/title/cover as a clue: a starting point for reading a story could be for students to 'feel' it, leaf through it, looking at the pictures, the table of contents, the beginning, but not the end, as that would take away the suspense. Students can predict or guess the plot of the book, then read and compare this with the real text.

Making "associograms": teachers may ask questions like – *What do you think of/associate with ...?* These are also called *brainstorming* activities. The teacher can ask students to think about the topic and list all words they would associate with this topic.

Introductory conversation relating the topic of the text to students' experiences: students may be asked questions to discover *how much they know about the topic*. In this case it is a question of eliciting and structuring information, and in the process of having a story related discussion language learners already practise oral skills.

Interviews: Interviews can be carried out in different ways. Students may be asked to compose questions themselves, therefore, they will need to know how to use the most common question words and the grammatical structures of different types of questions. Students can interview the teacher about the contents of the book [1, p. 48]. However, teachers should bear in mind that questions that introduce the topic are good to use, but not too many. If there are too many questions, the discussion may get too boring and monotonous.

Activities using vocabulary items. Vocabulary activities help students to understand challenging words or key concepts in the book. This helps the reading process to go more smoothly for students, allowing for involvement, participation and a more meaningful reading experience. Within this group we may single out the following activities.

Vocabulary work focusing on expanding topic-related vocabulary: this can be done in a number of ways, for example, by: a) making a topic related word-web, a word tree, or a word map of key-words in particular; b) working with new words. For instance, the teacher may introduce key words from the book learners are about to read and ask them to work in teams to compose their own stories. Alternatively, this can be done as a whole class activity when students are asked to use key words one by one and gradually compose their class version of the book.

Therefore, it is important to use a variety of pre-reading activities in the classroom, as in such a way students can improve and develop all four language skills. Besides, pre-reading activities can give students necessary background knowledge and vocabulary before reading, motivate them by allowing them to connect the text to their own lives. We should say that pre-reading activities motivate students to read the book. When they are motivated and prepared for the reading activity they complete the activity better and with less effort. Moreover, students are eager to participate in the activity since they have gained confidence. Besides, language teachers should encourage students to evaluate what they read. Pre-reading activities may help the teacher to facilitate this.

The while-reading activities must be varied, so that the learning environment is stimulating, exciting and unpredictable, and to stay motivated, they need goals and rewards. A teacher must plan each activity beforehand. It is also important to give clear instructions and to communicate to the students what is expected of them. Teachers should focus on stimulating their students' interest in reading. According to Ellis and Brewster, a general discussion of the novel read with students should include questions like:

1. *What is the chapter about?*
2. *Where is the chapter set?*
3. *Who is it about? (Name(s)? How old ...? What does ... look like? What is ... like? What happens to him/her/them? etc)*
4. *Other people/characters in the story: What are they like?*
5. *Relationships/conflicts between the different people/characters. How do they develop?*
6. *What happened? How did it all start? Why? What was the outcome?*
7. *Happy ending? Why? Why not?* [2, p. 106]

Activities based on predicting what happens next:

- 1) *activities focusing on the content;*
- 2) *activities focusing on the characters;*
- 3) *activities focusing on the language.* [3, p. 147]

Activity 1. Learners are asked only general questions: *What is going to happen next?* Teachers can stop reading and ask questions to provoke students to think about what they have been reading.

Activity 2. Students read a story with the end missing. In groups, they have to supply their own ending.

Let us suggest some examples of activities from each of these groups.

Activities focusing on the content of the story:

Activity 1. True – false – or doesn't say/no information: deciding whether statements related to the content of the text are true or false – or not mentioned in the text at all.

Activity 2. Multiple choice: deciding which statement about the content is correct out of 3-4 options.

Activity 3. Using comprehension questions: such questions are often used to check reading comprehension. We should keep in mind, however, that this requires language production skills, while we are trying to measure reading comprehension, which is after all a receptive skill.

Activity 4. Jigsaw exercises: finding the correct order for a series of extracts that have been cut up.

Activity 5. Written questionnaires: the teacher can ask students the questions based on or related to stories. Students' answers may lead to discussion.

Activity 6. Summarizing: students can summarize the novel in their own words [3, p. 178].

A teacher can also use some of the following while-reading activities focusing on the content of the story in the classroom:

Activity 1. Half of the students read the chapter, the other half interview those who have read it. Question words like *Who? How old? Where? When? What?* can be used when asking for factual information, bridging information gaps. Questions like *What is ... like? How? Why?* – can be used when asking for opinions, explanations and reasons.

Activity 2. The chapter and questions to the chapter can be copied and “cut up”. Student A can be given the first half of the chapter and the questions to the second half of the chapter. Pupil B can be given the second half of the chapter and the questions to the first

half of the chapter. A and B try to collect/give as much information as they can about the chapter, the questions giving them a clue as to what to ask about/answer. Similar interviews may also be used when students have different chapters.

Activity 3. “Cutting up” the written text. It can be done horizontally into several pieces and vertically into 2 pieces only. Each student in a group reads his/her part of the story and summarises the content for the others. By discussing each part, the group are to decide the logical sequence of events. One of the participants summarises the content. Afterwards the group compare their version with the original text.

Activity 4. A careful listener: while students read / listen to a chapter, they may answer easy factual questions like – who (name the main characters), what (describe one action that a character in the story did), where (setting of the story) or when (make a linear timeline of the sequence of events).

Activity 5. Reformulation. It may include:

1. Reading for gist and retelling the chapter of the book.
2. Retelling the book/ chapter using pictures or keywords.

Activity 6. Reading the novel and noting essential points in the text, focusing on content.

Activities focusing on the characters:

Activity 1. Somebody assumes the role of a character and the students try to guess who the person is by asking questions.

Activity 2. Learners ask the teacher only yes/no questions to find out who or what it is. The teacher thinks about a character or a place.

Activity 3. Students have to count how many characters are in the novel.

Finally, working with fiction teachers may focus on developing reading comprehension as well as practicing other language skills. Let us suggest some activities.

Activities focusing on the language used:

Activity 1. Gap-fill exercises:

1. Focusing on reading, and finding the right words for the blanks in a given context, e.g. a “cloze”, or an easier version, “Put the words back”, where the missing words are given below the text.

2. Focusing on the function of special words in the context, e.g. connectors (*therefore, so, and, because, however, on the other hand, etc*), verbs, or prepositions.

3. If the original story contained dialogues, students can complete a dialogue, in which several lines have been taken out, in such a way that the complete version will resemble a piece of natural speech in context.

Activity 2. Matching exercises:

1. Matching text (captions) to pictures.

2. Matching names to information in the text, e.g. *Who is what?*, people and jobs; or matching names, with some information attached to them, to the text: *Where would these people go? What would these people do?*

3. Matching two halves of sentences given in a different order in two separate columns, so that they make up meaningful sentences, (practicing sentence building).

While-reading activities can help students to improve their language skills, especially speaking and reading and to become more fluent in English. Activities at this stage may vary depending on the aim of using a particular book and learners' abilities. They may include taking notes, reacting, predicting, selecting significant information, questioning the writer's position, evaluating, and plac-

ing a text within one's own experience. It should be mentioned that students will be much more involved and motivated when they see that their hard work on the lessons has been leading somewhere. That is why reading activities are so important for students. Furthermore, the teacher checks comprehension of the text and provides questions on the text. The students are asked:

- 4) to give some specific information about one of the characters;
- 5) reproduce the text;
- 6) dramatise the text;
- 7) give the plan;
- 8) discuss the text;
- 9) do some exercises on the text;
- 10) have some communicative performance (discuss the problem which the text deals with; write a letter on this problem) to have other skills developed that correspond to the text). This stage in reading promotes communication.

Post-reading activities can also be given more artistic expression through drawings or illustrations linked to the written and oral tasks above.

Activity 1. Re-writing the end of the story: the teacher can encourage students to re-write the novel they have read from a different point of view, e.g. from the point of view of a particular main character in a different time and setting. Students may also re-tell the story.

Activity 2. Writing a letter: students can imagine they are different characters from the story and exchange letters with each other.

Activity 3. Make a video: this activity based on the read or heard story takes much time. On the other hand, it may be very motivating for students to make their own video, and they can use a wide variety of language in the process of video-making. For students the product is also helpful, because they can see what mistakes they make and thus learn from them [4, p. 98].

Activity 4. Reading the text, guessing or deducing the meaning of new words from the context. Finding words in the text that have the same or almost the same meaning, as given words.

Activity 5. Reading the text and crossing off words from the text in an associogram students produced at the pre-reading stage which contains many more.

Activity 6. Vocabulary analysis, using a dictionary and taking notes.

Activity 7. Analysis of grammar points and/or phraseology, using grammar textbooks [5, p. 227].

After or post-reading strategies provide students a way to summarize, reflect, and question what they have just read. They are an important component of the pre-, while, and post-reading strategy and is the core of good comprehension. There are also some other different types of post-reading activities:

1. Pre-question. A general question is given before reading, asking the learners to find out a piece of information central to the understanding of the text.

2. General comprehension of the text:

1. summarising. Learners:
 - 1) summarize the content in a sentence or two;
 - 2) give the plan of the text;
 - 3) speak on the main episodes / events of the text.
2. Answer the comprehension questions.

3. Do-it-yourself questions. Learners compose and answer their own questions.

4. Provide a title. Learners suggest a title if none was given originally; or an alternative, if there was.

5. Continue. The text is a story; learners suggest what might happen next.

6. Preface. The text is a story; learners suggest what might have happened before.

7. Gapped text. a) give a text with blanks, then there is a list of words which they are to fill in; b) towards the end of the text, four or five gaps are left that can only be filled in if the text has been understood. Note that this is different from the conventional cloze test (a text with regular gaps throughout) which tests grammatical and lexical accuracy and actually discourages purposeful, fluent reading; c) some part of the text is not clearly seen.

8. Mistakes in the text. The text has, toward the end, occasional mistakes (wrong words; or intrusive ones; or omissions). Learners are told in advance how many mistakes to look for.

9. Comparison. There are two texts on a similar topic; learners note points of similarity or difference of content.

10. Responding. a) discuss what you think of the problem raised in the text; b) the text is a letter or a provocative article; learners discuss how they would respond, or write an answer.

11. Re-presentation of content. The text gives information or tells a story; learners re-present its content through a different graphic medium. For example:

- 1) a drawing that illustrates the text;
- 2) colouring;
- 3) marking a map;
- 4) lists of events or items described in the text;
- 5) a diagram (such as a grid or flow chart) indicating relationship between items, characters or events.

12. Sort out. e.g. Some parts of the letter are mixed (formal & informal) Pupils are given a text that contains examples of 2 different texts – the aim is to reconstruct the texts.

13. Memory work. Say what they remember from the text (eg. what nouns were used with adjectives; brainstorm for adjectives).

14. Dramatise the situation.

As we have already noted, the use of fiction in teaching foreign languages has many advantages. However, there are some difficulties as well. We can single out the following *difficulties in using stories*, which we may group into 3 categories:

1 – related to insufficient knowledge of students:

- 1) dealing with unknown words and structures;

2 – related to students' involvement in reading activities:

- 1) sustaining students' interest to work hard;
- 2) initiating and sustaining discussions based on the book;

3 – related to resources:

- 1) selecting books which can be interesting for students;
- 2) getting enough copies of books which are too expensive;
- 3) lack of technical resources, e. g. video;
- 4) lack of time.

Thus, this research can provide some insights and guidelines for teachers of English how to incorporate novels in teaching English as a foreign language to Law students. Teaching ESP is a part of Foreign Language Syllabus of the Department of Foreign Languages for the Humanities at Lviv National University named after Ivan Franko. While teaching ESP we traditionally work on original law texts, extend students' knowledge of legal vocabulary, teach them how to write and defend their course and master's papers in English. These are well-known and time-tested activities aimed at students' mastering legal English which are traditionally used by teachers of English.

But we always need to introduce something new, something more modern, more efficient and challenging for students to master ESP language. And when our partners from American English Institute of the University of Oregon brought us several copies of "A Civil Action" by Jonathan Harr and handouts developed by one of the language instructors we realized that this book will stimulate our students' interest in ESP. The idea looked challenging to us as we saw many advantages of integrating different aspects of teaching in this kind of activity. Our idea was to stimulate law students' interest in law terminology, to make their ESP learning more enjoyable and effective and close to real life. Each reading assignment (250 pages per term divided into smaller like 75 pages every month) has the following parts:

1. Vocabulary (the most important for understanding the novel and their professional studies (ESP vocabulary). Students are given helpful vocabulary websites to look up the new vocabulary while reading.

2. Reading Comprehension Questions: a) General comprehension; b) Detailed questions focusing on specific information.

3. Journal writing (students answer journal questions. The goal is to have students develop fluency and greater comfort in expressing their ideas in English.

4. Grammar exercises are contextualized, i.e. examples are drawn from the novel.

5. CALL/Internet – students are asked to do internet searches to find information that complements reading (references to locations, author's biography, other books of the same author, prototypes of main characters).

Students learn to write essays on three topics: 1. What verdict would I pass if I were judge Skinner? 2. Whose example would you like to follow: Schlichtmann's or Facher's and why? 3. How has "A Civil Action" influenced my understanding of lawyer's profession? 4. Is Schlichtmann a winner or a loser?

The students express many interesting ideas, answering the questionnaire on the book "A Civil Action", sometimes their opinions were quite opposite but they were unanimous in saying that "A Civil Action" is a must to read for every lawyer, which teaches people life and profession.

The final stage on the book is the simulation of the moot court based on the court proceedings described in the book which includes opening and closing statements of counsellors, swearing on witnesses, selecting the jury penal, cross-examining witnesses and expert witnesses, the verdict of the jury and judge passing the sentence. They are role-plays but professionally oriented. Simulations are used when teaching English for Specific Purposes (ESP) to students who are being trained for their future profession. Some problem situations are given to students and they are discussing

some professional issues. For us, personally, the work on this book brought unforgettable moments, invaluable experience, positive moments, feeling of being on the right way and desire to continue.

So, **to summarise**, we may say that teachers should use a variety of activities at all reading stages. These activities motivate students to read books in the original. Moreover, they contribute to students' language development. The emergence of the Internet has made it possible to select books more quickly and efficiently. Despite a number of problems accompanying the use of fiction in a language classroom, they make the educational process more effective and contribute to the development of all language skills.

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Арцишевська А. Л., Гриня Н. О. Завдання до читання художнього твору в аудиторії

Анотація. У статті розглядається читання як один з аспектів у викладанні ESP. Особлива увага приділяється завданням до, під час та після читання художнього твору в аудиторії. Був запропонований комплекс вправ, які можна подати на стадії до, під час та після читання творів у аудиторії. Проведений огляд та аналіз різних типів завдань під час опрацювання твору.

Ключові слова: завдання до, під час та після читання художнього твору, художня література, вивчення ESP, словник, суть твору.

Арцишевская А. Л., Грыня Н. А. Задания к чтению художественного произведения в аудитории

Аннотация. В статье рассматривается чтение как один из аспектов преподавания ESP. Особое внимание уделено заданиям до, во время и после чтения художественного произведения в аудитории. Были предложены комплексы упражнений, которые можно проводить на стадии до, во время и после чтения художественного произведения в аудитории. Просматриваются и анализируются различные типы заданий в работе с произведением.

Ключевые слова: задания до, во время, после чтения художественного произведения, художественная литература, обучение ESP, словарь, содержание произведения.