

EFL Reading Strategies for Different Ages, levels and Class sizes in Educational Institutions

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<p>Pedagogical skill: Training Teachers to Teach and Use Different Reading Strategies with various age groups</p>	<p>Topic: Teaching Teachers How to Utilize Reading Circles, Concept Mapping in the Classroom at the Pre-basic, basic, and Independent levels</p>
<p>Curricular Thread 3: Training Teachers in Reading for Comprehension, Vocabulary, Classroom Management while Reading and Creating a Literary Rich Environment</p> <p>Source: Curriculos, 2016</p>	<p>Sub thread: Teacher Training for specific reading strategies such as Reading Circles or understanding the details or jist of a short simple text (2.3.2/2.3.3) , Concept Mapping or understanding a simple graphic organizer (2.3.6)</p>

Strategy 1: Reading Circle

Description

The objectives of this strategy are to construct literary environments in the classroom using reading circles. Another objective is to define roles of reading groups, so each student gains more knowledge while working together. The last objective is to demonstrate their understanding of

how to utilize reading circles in the classroom with differentiated levels to promote vocabulary learning and reading comprehension.

This is a strategy that can be used throughout different age levels of EFL learners. Students at all levels work in small groups and have various roles to help understand the reading. Depending on the age level of the students, different types of roles are given out. The lesson plan prepared below is for basic learners. The roles of the students are made a little simpler at this level. This strategy can help at basic and independent levels when the roles of the students are more complex since students have a higher level of reading in their L1 language. This strategy works best when students are given various leveled readers to choose from. This means students are given the autonomy and independence to choose which book they would like to read if the book is at the correct level of the student.

Implementation of the Teaching Strategy

The first step is to introduce levelled EFL readers, which are short stories specifically directed to a student's level of English. The teacher can explain that these types of readers are developed specifically for EFL learners to support reading comprehension and other reading skills. These readers are available for all ages and levels from adult A1.1 to C2.2 levels. These books can be found in Cambridge readers or other publishers online.

When working with leveled readers in the classroom students are broken into small groups of 4-5 students. As a warmer activity once students have the leveled reader is students can read the title and brainstorm ideas of what the book is about. Then have a short discussion. If the technology is available, you can watch a short video from YouTube about the topic the reader is about to introduce the theme of the book to the students. If no technology is then students can share their ideas of the topic of the book on poster papers and share in an "open house" format with the rest of the class. During this time the teacher can move through the class and observe and support the students where needed.

Once students have been introduced to the books, they will read each student will be assigned different roles that learners will play (example. Student 1 is the painter, student 2 word finder students 3 connector student 4 director student 5 storyteller). These worksheets can have pictures that explain each role if you have lower level learners. Once each student has a role, check that they understand their specific role.

Reading of the book can be a weekly or monthly task. Reading and completion of tasks assigned to each role is completed autonomously outside of class. When the groups meet each participant of the group can use their assigned roles to explain specific ideas of the assigned reading.

Finally, when the leveled reader is finished a project-based group assignment can be given to culminate the reading. This project could include a video about the book they just read, a blog including important information from the book, the creation of short book about a topic or them being discussed in class etc....

Materials needed to complete this reading strategy are a laptop, projector, leveled readers, poster paper, specific role worksheets, markers, a whiteboard and white board markers.

Differentiation

This strategy can be completed with classes between 20 – 30 students. Students need space to be able to work in small groups within the classroom. It is important that pre-basic levels have access to pictures of all new vocabulary since their level of reading is very low. The reading material for this level should consist of pictures and simple texts. The role worksheets also need to be adapted depending on the age and level of the students. For pre-basic level, the activity should consist of mostly images and a few words. For basic and independent age levels, the reading material can have be more advanced, but graded or leveled readers are advised to be used in this context. These types of readers allow students to read at their level. Materials for this strategy can include paper, copies, colors, scissors, glue, tables, chairs, projector, internet, colored pens and

pencils, erases, laptop, white board markers, and whiteboard and level readers, stories, copies or texts depending on the age level of the students. This strategy also works well if you have access to technology but it is not absolutely necessary. It can function well without any technology in the classroom. Finally, the teacher is the facilitator of the reading strategy. The role of the teacher is to give levelled material specific to students' interests and needs. Further, teacher should provide materials students need to complete the task, help them understand new vocabulary, aid in the students group and autonomous learning process. It is important to note that the times are for the trainees and not the time it would take in a real class.

Strategy 2: Concept Mapping

Description

This strategy can be used for understanding the main ideas and organizing long texts, books, fairy tales or short stories depending on the age or the level of the students.

Implementation of the Teaching Strategy

As a warmer, students can be paired to discuss what they think the reading or text will be about. Then they can share their ideas with the class in the form of a debate or question answer session. If technology is available a short video can be shown to introduce the topic being discussed in the reading or text. This strategy is used at the end of the reading activity. Therefore, once the students have finished the reading the teacher can review an example of a concept map and the various structures that can be followed depending on the teacher and needed learning outcome. Once an example has been shared with the students, they should be broken up into pairs to discuss the reading, text or short they completed. After the discussion they can begin to create the concept map. This can

be created with key words, short phrases or images depending on the age and level of the students.

Once the concept maps have been completed in pairs the teacher can ask two different pairs to work together. During this work session the different pairs will share what information was included in the concept map. The discussion can be based on guided questions provided by the teacher. Those questions could be:

What did you put in the concept map? Why?

What was the main idea?

What are the details?

What characters are included?

What do you think was important in the story? Why?

Describe your map?

After the discussion the pairs can then share important information they learned from the other pairs and turn in the concept map.

This activity can be repeated with different reading material that is chosen according to the level and age of the students. Concept maps work best with 20-34 students in a classroom where there is space for students to work in small groups and move around comfortably. Technology makes this easier to introduce, especially if students are low levels, but it is not necessary to complete the tasks and use the strategy in the classroom. The teachers' role is to guide students on the creation of a concept map. The teacher is available to answer any questions, but the students are working autonomously, while the teacher aids in the learning process. Trainees will be reminded that there are no wrong answers when it comes to concept mapping, so students can individually come up with interpretations of how they can create these maps. It is important to note that the time for the activities is specific for the trainees and not the actual students. The time for the activities would be longer when done in the classroom.

Differentiation

This activity can be repeated with different reading material that is chosen according to the level and age of the students. Concept maps work best with 20–34 students in a classroom where there is space for students to work in small groups and move around comfortably. Technology makes this easier to introduce, especially if students have low levels, but it is not necessary to complete the tasks and use the strategy in the classroom. The teachers' role is to guide students on the creation of a concept map. The teacher is available to answer any questions, but the students are working autonomously, while the teacher aids in the learning process. Trainees will be reminded that there are no wrong answers when it comes to concept mapping, so students can individually come up with interpretations of how they can create these maps.

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