

Reading Skill

Receptive skills

The receptive skills are listening and reading, because learners do not need to produce language to do these, they receive and understand it. These skills are sometimes known as passive skills. They can be contrasted with the **productive** or active skills of speaking and writing.

Example

Often in the process of learning new language, learners begin with receptive understanding of the new items, then later move on to **productive** use.

In the classroom

The relationship between receptive and productive skills is a complex one, with one set of skills naturally supporting another. For example, building reading skills can contribute to the development of writing.

Intensive reading

Intensive reading involves learners reading in detail with specific learning aims and tasks. It can be compared with extensive reading, which involves learners reading texts for enjoyment and to develop general reading skills.

Example

The learners read a short text and put events from it into chronological order.

In the classroom

Intensive reading activities include skimming a text for specific information to answer true or false statements or filling gaps in a summary, scanning a text to match headings to paragraphs, and scanning jumbled paragraphs and then reading them carefully to put them into the correct order.

Extensive reading

It involves students reading long texts or large quantities for general understanding, with the intention of enjoying the texts. The principal objective of undertaking an extensive reading approach is to get students reading in English and liking it. An increase in reading fluency should be another objective.

In intensive reading, there is not always a follow-up discussion or work in class. In this way students are encouraged to read for pleasure and become better readers.

The characteristics of an extensive reading approach

- **Reading material**

Reading for pleasure requires a large selection of books be available for students to choose from at their level. Here, teachers can make good use of graded readers (books which have been written specifically for EFL/ESL students or which have been adapted from authentic texts).

- **Student choice**

Students choose what they want to read based on their interests. If a student finds a book is too difficult or they don't enjoy it, they can change it for another one.

- **Language level**

The vocabulary and grammar of the books that students read should not be difficult. The objective of an extensive reading programme is to encourage reading fluency, so students should not be stopping frequently because they do not understand a passage. However, the books should not be too easy as this may demotivate students, who feel they are getting

- nothing out of the books.

Critical reading

It is a type of reading in which the reader reacts critically to what he or she is reading, through relating the content of the reading material to personal standards, values, attitudes or beliefs, i.e. going beyond what is given in the text and evaluating what is read.

Reading Strategies

- **Reviewing:** reviewing titles, section headings, and photo captions to get a sense of the structure and content of a reading selection
- **Predicting:** using knowledge of the subject matter to make predictions about content and vocabulary and check comprehension; using knowledge of the text type (genre) and purpose to make predictions about discourse structure; using knowledge about the author to make predictions about writing style, vocabulary, and content
- **Skimming and scanning:** using a quick survey of the text to get the main idea, identify text structure, confirm or question predictions
- **Guessing from context:** using prior knowledge of the subject and the ideas in the text as clues to the meanings of unknown words, instead of stopping to look them up
- **Paraphrasing:** stopping at the end of a section to check comprehension by restating the information and ideas in the text

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