

IMPROVING ENGLISH READING SKILLS: FROM BASIC TEXTS TO ACADEMIC LITERATURE

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This article examines effective methods for developing English reading skills, from basic texts to academic literature. It analyzes strategies aimed at improving comprehension, critical analysis, and vocabulary expansion. Special attention is paid to the transition to academic reading, as well as the benefits of consistent practice and personalized learning.

Key words: reading skills, English language, academic literature, language learning, teaching methods, text comprehension.

Introduction.

Developing strong reading skills in English is crucial for academic and professional success. However, many learners struggle with the transition from basic texts to the demanding nature of academic literature. This article addresses strategies that can be used to improve reading proficiency by creating a structured path that builds confidence and competence. Drawing on modern educational research and practical examples, the study examines how scaffolding, strategic reading, and vocabulary development can enhance students' ability to comprehend and analyze complex texts.

Scaffolding Reading Skills:

The journey from basic texts to academic literature requires a gradual and structured approach. Scaffolding involves breaking down complex reading tasks into manageable steps, providing support at each stage. Teachers can begin with simplified texts that focus on core vocabulary and basic sentence structures, gradually introducing more complex grammatical forms and specialized vocabulary. For example, starting with graded readers or simplified news articles can build foundational skills before moving to academic journals or research papers.

Using pre-reading activities such as brainstorming, vocabulary previews, and background knowledge activation can prepare learners for the content of the text. During reading, teachers can guide students with comprehension questions, highlighting key points, and summarizing sections. Post-reading activities like discussions, summaries, and critical analyses help reinforce understanding and develop analytical skills.

Strategic Reading Techniques:

Effective reading involves more than just decoding words. Strategic reading techniques help learners engage actively with texts and improve comprehension. Skimming, scanning, and close reading are essential skills for navigating different types of texts. Skimming helps learners get a general overview of the text, while scanning allows them to locate specific information quickly. Close reading involves a detailed analysis of the text, focusing on language, structure, and meaning.

Teaching students to identify the main idea, supporting details, and author's purpose can enhance their comprehension. Highlighting, note-taking, and summarizing are valuable tools for active reading. Encouraging learners to ask questions, make predictions, and connect the text to their own experiences fosters deeper engagement and critical thinking.

Vocabulary Building and Contextual Clues:

Vocabulary acquisition is crucial for reading comprehension. Teachers can introduce new vocabulary through pre-reading activities, contextual clues, and explicit instruction. Using word lists, flashcards, and vocabulary journals can help learners memorize and retain new words. Encouraging learners to use dictionaries and thesauruses enhances their understanding of word meanings and usage.

Contextual clues are essential for understanding unfamiliar words. Teachers can teach learners to use surrounding words, phrases, and sentences to infer the meaning of new vocabulary. Analyzing prefixes, suffixes, and root words can also help learners decode complex words.

Integrating Authentic Materials:

Authentic materials, such as academic journals, research papers, and scholarly articles, expose learners to the language and style of academic writing. Teachers can start by selecting excerpts from authentic

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texts and gradually increase the complexity. Using authentic materials in conjunction with scaffolding and strategic reading techniques can prepare learners for the challenges of academic reading.

Introducing learners to different academic genres, such as essays, reports, and reviews, can broaden their understanding of academic writing conventions. Analyzing the structure, language, and style of these genres helps learners develop the skills needed to comprehend and produce academic texts.

Challenges and Potential Barriers:

Transitioning to academic reading presents several challenges. Academic texts often use complex vocabulary, dense sentence structures, and abstract concepts. Learners may struggle with the specialized language and cultural references found in academic literature. Teachers must provide adequate support and guidance to help learners overcome these challenges.

Time constraints, large class sizes, and diverse learning needs can also hinder the development of reading skills. Teachers must be flexible and adaptable, using a variety of teaching methods and resources to meet the needs of all learners.

Conclusion:

Improving English reading skills from basic texts to academic literature is a progressive journey that requires structured guidance and consistent practice. By implementing scaffolding, strategic reading techniques, vocabulary building, and the integration of authentic materials, teachers can empower learners to navigate complex texts with confidence. Personalized learning approaches and continuous support can help learners develop a lifelong love of reading and enhance their academic and professional success.

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