

# TEACHING READING, WRITING AND GRAMMAR IN ESP

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**Abstract:** *reading is the primary channel through which our students will progress in English. A good reading program provides instruction in the skills required at various levels of reading, along with plenty of practice in this skill, which can only be developed through extensive and continual practice. Two types of skills are needed in reading: simple identification skills, (decoding) and higher level cognitive skills such as analyzing, synthesizing, and predicting.*

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Our reading program should work on two levels to develop both types of skill. In order to do this, our program should incorporate two types of reading tasks: intensive and extensive. Intensive reading is close analysis of a short passage and can be used to develop vocabulary, grammar skills, and comprehension. Extensive reading is faster reading of longer passages to develop understanding of writers' organizational strategies, to improve reading speed, and to focus on main ideas [1].

Fluent reading depends primarily on knowledge of vocabulary and subject matter, secondarily on knowledge of grammatical structure and familiarity with the ways that writers organize texts in English. Vocabulary development, then, is a vital aspect of reading (and listening) development. Our students will need to develop a good vocabulary in English in order to be efficient readers and listeners. We will probably find that they already know quite a lot technical vocabulary in English in their fields. We can help them to expand their technical vocabulary and develop the additional vocabulary they need for further study. Vocabulary should be taught only in context, never in word lists to be memorized with dictionary definitions. We should use real objects or pictures whenever possible to introduce new words. The vocabulary we teach should be words which are useful for the students in the situations in which they encounter English. We should not give long lists of words each week; instead, we should focus on useful words that are present in the reading and listening passages students are working with.

Grammar is best taught in connection with writing, but exercises related to the reading and listening passages the students have worked with can also help them to increase their reading comprehension. We must help students focus on grammatical structures which appear in reading texts, such as verb forms, possessives, adjectives and adverb, and comparative forms.

Our ESP students already bring their knowledge of the subject matter to the reading task, and their backgrounds in their fields will help make the reading materials more comprehensible to them. Students' higher level cognitive skills can be tapped by giving them advance information about the texts they are asked to read, and by teaching them to preview texts before beginning to read. Previewing is a quick reading for general familiarity, in which students a) read the introductory paragraph; b) read the first sentence of each of the body paragraphs; and c) read the entire minutes, and will enhance their reading comprehension [2].

The SQ3R technique is commonly used to help students get the most from their reading. SQ3R means Survey, Question, Read, Recite, and review. Students should receive practice in reading for different purposes, such as finding main ideas, finding specific information, or discovering the author's point of view. Students should have a clear idea of the purpose of their reading before they begin. Background information is very helpful in understanding texts. Students need advance guidelines for approaching each assignment. Knowing the purpose of the assignment will help students get the most from their reading effort. From the title, for instance, they can be asked to predict what the text is about. It is also helpful to give students some questions to think about as they read. The way the approach the reading task will depend on the purpose for which they are reading.

Comprehension checks can be built into reading as well as listening exercises. Use long articles as well as short passages. Students need practice with long blocks of text which they read for main ideas as well as intensive work with paragraphs and short passages. Long articles can be read outside of class to provide background for the work that will be done during the class period. You can make long passages more accessible to students by dividing the text into sections and adding appropriate sub-headings.

We should train students to recognize patterns of organization of texts. We should not ask the students to read aloud in class to test their comprehension. When reading aloud, the reader focuses on pronunciation, not comprehension. In any case, listening to other students' inaccurate reading is boring and counterproductive. Students should read silently when reading is to be done in class.

### References

1. *Howe, Brian*. 1987. Portfolio. London. Longman.
2. *Hutchinson, T. and A. Waters*. 1987. English for Specific Purposes. Cambridge. Cambridge University Press.