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BAELS3B

Assessing Reading

In this unit, how to become an efficient reader, micro and macro skills of reading, and how to assess reading skills were discussed. Reading is the most essential skill for success in all educational contexts. It remains a skill of paramount importance as we create assessments of general language ability. There are hurdles to be cleared in order to become an efficient reader. First, one must master bottom-up (data-driven) and top-down (concept-driven) approaches. Second, one must develop content (background knowledge) and formal schemata. The assessment of reading ability does not end with comprehension, strategies in reading are also important factors to help students in their summative tests. The types or genres of reading were also (re)introduced namely: (1) academic, such as reference materials, thesis, textbooks, editorials, etc.; (2) job-related types such as emails, memos, monthly reports, directories, labels, financial documents, etc.; and lastly (3), those personal types such as recipes, notes, invitations, greetings, and fiction. Efficient readers have to know what their purpose is in reading a text. They also have to know the strategies for accomplishing that purpose and how to retain the information. There are four types of designing a reading assessment task: perceptive, selective, interactive, and extensive. Perceptive reading primarily focused on bottom-processing; it simply wants to know if the student can read or not. It includes reading aloud, multiple-choice, or picture-cued items. Selective reading involves looking at a reader's ability to recognize grammar, discourse features, etc. Interactive reading involves deriving meaning from the text. It emphasizes top-down processing. Readings are often chosen from genres that employ implied main ideas rather than stated. Tasks in interactive reading include cloze tasks, impromptu, scanning, etc. Extensive reading is reading large amounts of information and being able to understand the "big picture". The goal is to improve learners' word recognition and builds overall reading ability. Tasks involve skimming, summarizing and responding, and note-taking and outlining.

I mostly do reading in my free time thus I have picked up a bit of some reading strategies along the way such as skimming and scanning. I also silent read 98% of my reading as I found that I can't process the information when I read aloud. It's also a habit now that when I read fictional books, I will tab/highlight/note parts of the story because I may want to go back and see what it is about. Reading as a hobby has also contributed to my critical thinking skills that I thought I might have. I at least know how to distinguish literal meanings from implied ones. As English majors, we have tasks about creating lesson plans and I coincidentally always end up being tasked to do one about reading. One of my recent lesson

plans involves teaching two strategies of reading which are scanning and skimming. In my activity, they have to find the answers to my questions from the reading materials (news articles) I have given on the spot. Since it is in the context that if they can't answer within one minute, their intended points can be snatched up by another student, thus they have to be quick in finding the information making them use the scanning strategy.

I may already have a background in reading and reading strategies in general, knowing other reading tasks are still new to me. I didn't even realize that some of the micro-skills of reading exist until this lesson. Just like stated in the content, knowing these reading skills can be used to develop some strategies for reading. More reading techniques equal to better accomplishing and retaining the information. Moreover, knowing the skills needed in reading is crucial in making assessment tasks for it.

In the situation where I might not ever apply this as a teacher, the reading strategies I have learned alone can be already used in my future reading escapade. This course subject is not for naught, there will come a day in the future where we can look back and think that *I have encountered this in my university days*.