CLT Strategies for Developing Reading Skill among the Students

Dr.S.V.Ramesh Kumar
Assistant Professor in English
PVKN.Govt.College(A),
Chittoor, AP
Mobile:9491520740
e-mail: saverakumar123@gmail.com

Introduction:

Reading is a useful and an important skill of learning a language. It opens a treasure of knowledge to the readers. It is the process of looking at the written symbols, understanding and visualizing them. It is useful to get information, understand things, get pleasure and improve knowledge. It plays a key role in our practical life in understanding and interpreting things from News papers, advertisements, Doctors' prescriptions, wall posters, job notifications, govt. orders etc. But in the present age of technology, students are very much engaged to watch, listen and chat through internet and mobiles. These days we rarely find students reading novels or books. In academics many students read English passively and so fail to comprehend the text, which leads to dislike for reading. In this scenario, it is a huge task for the English teachers to motivate students to read English actively and make English reading an interesting activity. If English teachers are successful in developing reading habit among the students, it paves way for their success

Different types of Reading:

There are different types of reading like loud reading and silent reading, skimming and scanning, intensive reading and extensive reading. Loud reading is for listening and it helps the teachers to correct the mistakes of students in reading a text. It helps to develop the reading abilities of students. Silent reading is for comprehensive, interpretation and analyzing the text.

Skimming is previewing text very quickly for general understanding. It helps the students to understand the text at surface and answer the questions such as "what is the text about?", "who is the writer?", "What is the writer's purpose?" etc. Scanning is reading the given text for specific information. Here students read the given text in depth, understand, analyze and interpret.

Intensive reading means reading a text with a purpose. It is a purposeful reading with certain aims and objectives, like reading from the prescribed text book or syllabus. Extensive reading is reading beyond the syllabus and it is reading for entertainment and general information, usually outside the prescribed syllabus.

Factors affecting English Reading skill of students:

The factors that affect the reading skill of students include emotional disturbances, social issues, physical factors, health problems and educational issues. The reading skill of the students is very much affected by emotional disturbances like shyness, fear for mistakes, fear for punishment, inferiority complex etc. Social issues like lack of proper parental guidance, discouraging home atmosphere, ill treatment by classmates basing on gender, caste or religious status also affect the reading abilities of students. Physical factors such as lighting in the class and class room set up also sometimes influence the reading abilities of students. Vision problems, hearing disabilities are some health problems that can impact the skill of students. The educational issues like inappropriate teaching material, lack of text books and unscientific methods of learning shall influence the reading disabilities of students.

These factors affecting the English reading abilities of students cannot be removed by the English teachers alone. But with standard teaching material, interesting activities, Communicative Language Teaching method (CLT) these barriers can be removed to certain extent and good reading habits can be developed.

CLT Method:

In English language teaching there are many methods with their own merits and demerits, Communicative Language Teaching is one method among them. CLT is a learner centered method, with an emphasis on communicative activities that mimic real life situations. It is based on the principle Language is for communication, hence emphasizes on contextual learning. It is an activity based and skill oriented method. In this method students are active, engaged in learning by their involvement in the activity. Teachers plan and set up the learning activities, act as co-communicators and facilitators. In this method Student talk time is more than teacher talk time. Before introducing the learning activities, students are motivated through icebreaking activities or energizers. All the activities conducted in this method are purposeful, means teacher

has to give a task before giving the reading material. Pair work and group work are two common practices followed in CLT class room, to provide plenty of opportunity to practice the target language. At the primary stage fluency is given importance and accuracy is taken care at the later stage. Teacher should give minimum input and extract maximum output from the students.

CLT Strategies for Reading:

The following are some strategies that can be planned and implemented in the English classes by the English teachers.

Ice breaking activities:

Let us think that, the previous period is Mathematics and the Mathematics teacher has given a class work and students are still engaged in solving the problems when the English enters the class room. Most of the student minds may be still thinking about the unsolved problems. It is first duty of the English teachers to bring the student's minds from mathematics into English domain. To break the ice, English teacher has to do some activity relating to the target skill i.e. Reading skill.

Model Ice breaking activity for Reading skill:

Teacher writes the sentence "The quick brown fox jumps over the lazy dog" on the black board and asks the students to identify the missing letter of English alphabet. Students try to identify the letter missing and finally teacher concludes that it is a sentence with all letters of English alphabet.

Reading Activities:

Before the beginning of a reading activity, teacher divides the class into pairs or groups as per the plan. In the success of any activity, teachers' instructions are important. Hence before each activity teacher has to give simple and clear activity. If possible, it is better to repeat the instructions.

All the Reading activities must be planned according to the students' standard and their background. If the reading material selected is beyond the syllabus, then utmost care is to be taken about difficulty of the concept, standard of language, familiarity of the concept etc. It is

always better to move from simple to complex and familiar to unfamiliar concepts. The task can be a language activity either writing task or speaking task. The tasks include skimming questions, scanning questions, yes/ no statements, true/ false statements, matching, fill in the blanks, drawing a picture, rearranging jumbled statements, word puzzles, role plays, group discussions, debate, quiz etc. The reading material provided for the activity may include different types like a paragraph, pictures, word puzzles, flow chart etc. The more the variety of the task and reading material, more will be the interest for the students. Hence teachers should take utmost care in providing a variety of reading material and planning variety of tasks. Students read the given text and complete the task. At the end, teacher can conclude the activity by discussing the answers or grammar point behind it.

Plan and execution of a Reading activity:

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┌─────────────────────────────────────────────┐
│      Divide the class into pairs or groups   │
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┌─────────────────────────────────────────────┐
│            Give clear instructions           │
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┌─────────────────────────────────────────────┐
│                 Set the task                 │
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                      ↓
┌─────────────────────────────────────────────┐
│          Provide the reading material        │
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┌─────────────────────────────────────────────┐
│             Students read the text           │
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┌─────────────────────────────────────────────┐
│          Teacher minitors the activity       │
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┌─────────────────────────────────────────────┐
│          Students finish the given task      │
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┌─────────────────────────────────────────────┐
│  Teacher concludes the activity by discussing the answers.  │
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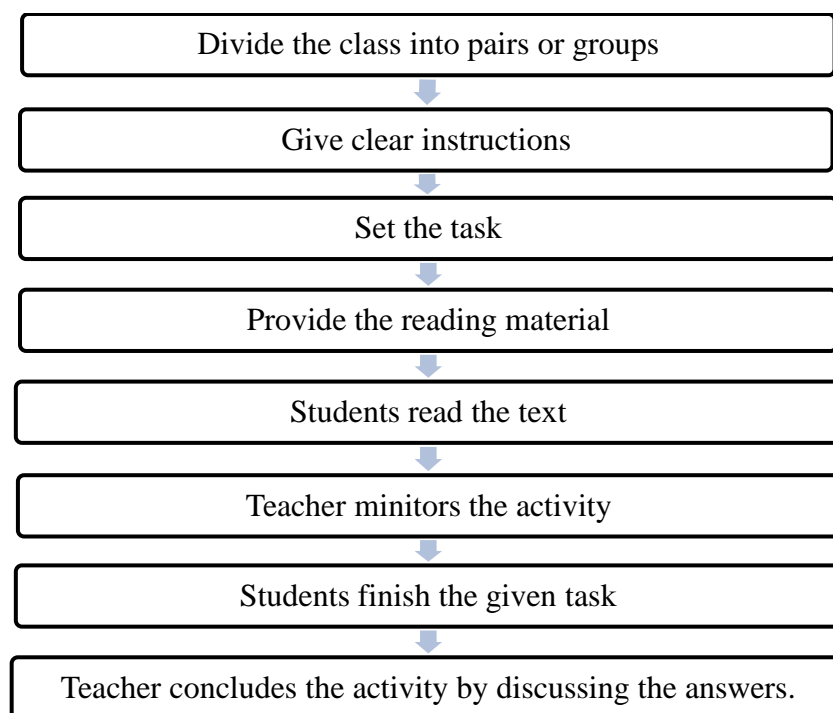
Model Reading Activities:

The following are some model reading activities that can be implemented in different standards of English classes.

Activity-1: Read and follow the instructions and draw a picture in a blank paper.

- ❖ Draw a line across in the middle of the given box across so that it divides the paper into equal halves.
- ❖ In the upper half draw two hills, above the hills the Sun, two birds flying in the sky.
- ❖ In the lower half draw a tree, four children playing under the tree and a house.

Summary of Activity-1: Students read the given instructions and draw a picture. They show much interest in this activity because students love drawing. By such activities students develop interest for reading. This can be used for students of primary stages and can be taken up as a pair work.

Activity-2: Study the given Word Puzzle, find the verbs relating to the students class room activities and list out them.

A	Z	W	Y	U	N	R	V
W	R	O	W	X	Z	E	B
L	E	A	R	N	H	M	C
Q	A	L	I	S	T	E	N
Y	D	M	T	P	J	M	Y
B	V	G	E	E	Q	B	X
S	X	D	R	A	W	E	Z
Q	T	A	L	K	A	R	P

Summary of Activity-2: Students identify the words and list out in their notes. Students find this activity interesting because they like to study a word puzzle than a regular paragraph. This activity helps to identify the words. This activity can be used for students of middle stages and can be taken up as a pair work.

#Activity-3: You met a traveller on road and he asks you the way to Reliance mart.

Read the given dialogue and fill in the blanks.

Traveller: ---------------------------------------

Native: Yes, tell me.

Traveller: ---?

Native: Reliance mart is in Greamspet.

Traveller: ---?

Native: It's about two kilometers.

Traveller: ----------------------------------?

Native: You can go there by bus.

Traveller: -----------------------------------?

Native: Bus number 22 goes there.

Traveller: --?

Native: It takes about half an hour.

Traveller: --?

Native: The nearest bus stop is at Sherman school.

Traveller: ----------------------------?

Native: You should get down at Z.P.Office.

Traveller: -----------------------------.

Native: You are welcome.

Summary of Activity-3: Students study the given the dialogue and fill in the blanks. This can be taken up as a group activity. Students discuss in groups and report to the answers to the class. At the end of the activity teachers can discuss the answers and also the grammar behind the answers.

Conclusion: The main focus of these activities is to make English reading an interesting activity and to develop reading habits among the students. Hence the content should be simple and activity should be interesting. If the concept too abstract and difficult to read and understand, students of primary stages may feel discouraged because they find two barriers, concept barrier and langauge barrier, in between them and the target. Conducting simple and intersting CLT activities, either as part of regular syllabus or outside the syllabus, shall help to develop reading skill among the students.

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