ESL Developmental Continuum P–10

Teaching strategy – Guided reading

Focuses on

Speaking Listening **Reading** Writing

Most useful for students at stages

A1 A2 BL B1 B2 B3 SL S1 S2 S3 S4

Purpose of this activity

Guided reading is a small group activity where the teacher helps students to practise strategies to read a text independently. Texts chosen for guided reading need to be at an appropriate level that will provide the necessary supports and challenges for the students as they read the text. The topics of the texts should also be familiar and of interest to the students. Guided reading is suited to ESL students who have developed some basic print literacy and who are able to engage in scaffolded discussions about texts with the teacher.

How this helps ESL students in particular

Guided reading:

- allows for explicit teaching of strategies for using cueing systems and meaning making, e.g. asking questions, locating information, inferring
- provides a context for teaching about how language is used for specific purposes
- sets a clear purpose for reading through focus questions
- supports students to read for meaning at a literal, inferential and evaluative level.

Procedure

The key steps of guided reading are:

- The teacher selects an unfamiliar text to support the teaching of a specific focus.
- The teacher orients the students to the text to prepare them for independent reading of the text.
- The teacher makes the purpose for reading explicit to the students.
- The students read the text independently as the teacher helps them to use the reading strategies they know.
- The teacher supports the students to discuss and respond critically to the text through focussed questions and prompts.

Using guided reading with ESL students

Model the language and language patterns in the text when introducing the text.

Teach items of vocabulary which might be unfamiliar to the students before reading the text.

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Read the first section of the text for or with the students to establish the sentence structure or patterns in the text that will help students make predictions based on what they are familiar with.

Provide a guiding question to focus the students' reading of a selected section of a text, for example, 'Read pages 5 and 6 to find out where kangaroos are found'.

Provide a range of texts to engage the students with different forms and purposes of texts.

Select texts at the students' level which will develop students' understanding of English, for example:

- tense
- subject-verb–object pattern
- subject-verb agreement
- pronouns as reference items
- conjunctions which link ideas
- modal verbs e.g. should, might, must
- simple, compound and complex sentences.

Select texts at the students' level which will develop students' understanding of the structural elements of how different text types are organised, for example: narratives, information reports etc.

Consider the features of the layout of the text and how these features might support or confuse students:

- Are there main headings and sub-headings?
- Is there a table of contents?
- Is the text set out to read from left to right, top to bottom, or are there boxes of text at different points on the page, pictures with captions or labels, speech bubbles?
- Do the illustrations support the print text?

When supporting students to use the cueing systems consider:

> Students may be familiar with concepts and ideas in a text but not know how to name them in English, e.g. in a text that is about different types of fruit, students might know the names of the fruit in their first language but not in English. This limits their ability to draw on semantic cues.
>
> Students will use syntactic cues based on their knowledge of English grammar, e.g. they might read 'He like football'. Teachers need to model the language structures of the text to highlight 'how it is said in English' as well as teaching how to cross check by using other cues, e.g. graphophonic, sentence patterns.

Acknowledgments / reference

Education Department of Western Australia (2004). *Reading: Resource book, 2nd ed*. Port Melbourne: Rigby Heineman.

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Hornsby, D. (2000). *A Closer Look at Guided Reading*. Armadale: Eleanor Curtain.

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