

# Teacher's Role in Encouraging Student Participation in Reading Skills

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## Abstract

It is a significant truth that acquiring a new language requires mastering in different skills for students in any levels. Comprehension in reading is one of the most important parts for both students and teachers in English Language Teaching. Making them aware of the skills in reading such as skimming, scanning, etc. helps both teachers and students to achieve their goals. What's more, learners not only comprehend the texts but also they broaden and improve various language skills and cultural aspects. This study aims to illustrate why teacher's role is important in encouraging student participation for reading skills in any levels. It is an undeniable fact that language teachers have great impact on motivating students especially in reading because most of the students hesitate to read most of the texts in course books even if they are short and simple. Therefore, being involved in such studies gives students opportunities to read in a more effective way by focusing on several reading strategies. Another reason why motivation is vital for students is to develop themselves in terms of gaining creative thinking skills and flourish their self-confidence by expressing their ideas freely in the language they are learning. In this study, it has been clearly indicated that how teachers can encourage students to participate in reading activities in a detailed way.

**Keywords:** comprehension, creative thinking skills, cultural aspects, language learning, reading skills

## **Introduction**

As a cognitive activity, reading is an inevitable skill for the language learners that envisions in the globalized context. Therefore, students must be aware of what they should learn from reading skill. When a student reads, it helps them both to broaden their horizons and to be successful in comprehension. It is stated that as reading makes people knowledgeable and conscious about their surroundings, they feel more free and sophisticated. In the process of reading, readers ought to be away from all kinds of distractions during the process of reading.

It must be focused on by the educators that all sorts of reading contribute to understand beyond the lines instead of just concentrating on the lines themselves. A critical reader should have some qualities such as judging the author's assumptions, making inferences, and reaching conclusions, and pointing the reliability, accuracy, quality and value within the standards based on their previous experiences. However, the common problem for most of the students is not being able to deal with learning a new language, especially the reading skills, and using it either in or out of the classroom. The main reason may lie under the fact that they recognize these reading skills as something very difficult and even challenging (getting bad marks, ashamed of making mistakes, etc.). This attitude towards learning a new language deters students from participating in all kinds of classroom activities; thus, this attitude prevents them from learning. As teachers we have to give hope and confidence to our students and embolden them to use the language in reading skills which is a challenge for them. At this point, a question arises for most of the teachers: How should we encourage students to participate in reading skills activities in classrooms? Here, to achieve this goal the teachers' roles – being the motivator, the informant, and the conductor - are significant in the classroom. In addition to these roles, teachers should benefit from the techniques taught in reading skills classes such as skimming & scanning.

## **Teachers' Roles**

### **Motivator**

Being a motivator is one of the most important roles of a teacher because depending on the technical virtues a teacher has, the capability of a teacher, students will be good at learning. If they are not motivated enough, they will fail. Some of the motivating factors are as follows:

### **Personality of the teacher**

- A teacher's overall attitude should be sensitive, encouraging, sympathetic, open minded and flexible.
- A teacher should avoid sarcasm and ridicule aimed at the student when he cannot read or comprehend what he reads.
- A teacher should be seen by the students to be both confident and competent.
- A teacher should have a clear way of thought - confusing thoughts may distract the students.

### **Teacher's ability to interest students in reading skills**

If the students are bored, they will pay no attention, so they will be easily distracted and start getting up to mischief as a result prevent others from learning, that is why a teacher must provide interest to avoid this situation. Interest can be provided through

- identifying and catering to the student's interests in terms of topics such as themselves, their hobbies, ambitions, dreams, etc.
- bringing into the classroom a variety of language points, practice skills and providing interaction in terms of T-S, S-T, S-S and pair or group activities,
- bringing humour into the classroom by using visual aids such as cartoons, anecdotes and jokes as reading texts and interesting tasks.

Here all the teachers should remember that the students are more likely to be interested in the teachers and what they are doing. If the learners are interested in them, regardless of the size of the class, the educators must do their best to engage all the students to join the activities.

### **Informant**

That the teacher's most important role as an informant is a well-known fact. The teacher

- does the first presentation in the reading class
- extends the already presented material
- reminds students the forgotten tasks
- gives explanations not only during the first presentation and revisions stages, but also during remedial study.

Here what and how much information to give should be borne in mind by the teacher. The learners should be taught in steps and stages in order not to be loaded with too much information, otherwise they would get lost and confused in what they are trying to learn and absorb.

### **Conductor**

Here conductor means the person who conducts the lesson. The role is concerned with the practical things a teacher needs to be able to do in the lesson. The teacher must be able to:

- handle aid.
- give clues.
- give instructions for the activities.
- provide a model for students to imitate.
- explain things and answer students' queries.
- elicit answers from the students instead of simply giving them.
- set rules and check that if the students have understood the concepts required.

## **Techniques for Better Comprehension in Reading Skills**

Teachers should give enough training to the learners in order to improve their reading skills. Skimming and scanning are two of the reading techniques which are used widely and effectively in reading classes.

### **Skimming**

Skimming is a method of ‘reading a text very quickly’. We use this technique to get the general idea (the gist) of a reading text. It is important to look out for key words like titles, subtitles, and subheadings instead of reading every word or sentence. Readers should move their eyes quickly to find the main idea and they shouldn’t try to understand every word. Looking at pictures or photos can be another helpful approach. If a text is long, readers ought to focus on the first and the last paragraph of that text.

Learners skim read

- when they choose and buy a reading book in a bookshop by quickly looking over the back page, title, writer and the pictures of books.
- when they choose and read the most interesting news in a newspaper by looking at the title, subtitle and the pictures fast.
- when they revise or memorize something by reading the highlighted and the most important parts of their texts before exams, speeches and presentations.

### **Scanning**

Scanning is a method of ‘reading a text very quickly’ like skimming method. We use the scanning technique to look up a phone number, read through small ads in a newspaper, or for browsing television schedules, timetables, lists, catalogues, or webpages for information. For these tasks, learners don’t need to read or understand every word in a text.

Scanning is also useful when students don’t have time to read every word. This could be when they are studying or looking for specific information from a book or article and when they need to find it quickly.

Students should

- not try to read every word
- focus on the information they are looking for
- use clues on the page, such as headings and titles, to help them

### **The Differences Between Skimming and Scanning**

The main difference between scanning and scanning is that a person stops once he or she gets the information needed while scanning for it. Scanning is used with the aim of searching a piece of specific information; that is a certain answer to a specific question. As someone searches and would like to get the general impression of what is included in the text, skimming is used.

Both techniques are helpful for learners to get the general meaning and specific information they are looking for. For this reason, while learning a new foreign language

within the frame of reading skills, it is possible for the learners to take advantage of these techniques in addition to the other techniques such as inferencing, guessing meaning from the context, referencing, and etc.

## Conclusion

It is clearly seen that the teacher's roles are significant in terms of encouraging students to participate in reading skills for ELT classes. This encouragement involves a sympathetic attitude, not demanding beyond the students' capabilities, not overcorrecting and praising what has been well done. Only by this way the teacher can help students to overcome their problems and fears regarding the difficulties of learning a second language. By knowing the needs and by being interested in the problems of the students, a well prepared and enthusiastic teacher can create a better atmosphere and more effective lesson in the classroom. Besides, if more interesting activities such as role plays, individual works, and group works are brought into the class, the learners will be more willing to participate and thus to learn.

Reading enriches enlightenment and enjoyment. When reading gets more enjoyable, it is possible that an inward desire to know more is born. Making all think critically and creatively is also valid. Every teacher should insist on the importance of reading and its techniques when reading leads to the world of the unknown. These techniques can be used effectively with a wide range of levels starting from elementary to advanced, either interpreting them or using their original versions.

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