

FROM THE FIELD

Giving Students a Purpose to Read: A Lesson Plan



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is an MA holder in linguistics. Presently, he is working at ADNOC Technical Academy (ATA), one of the largest oil companies in the world UAE, as instructor. He has been in the field of teaching since 1984. He has conducted and attended more than 50 presentations, workshops, and conferences organized by TESOL Arabia. He has designed and developed new curriculum for Foundation Program (General English) and Technical Program (ESP English) at different universities and institutes. He was an English language expert for AGOCO Oil Company, Libya in 1996. He taught TOEFL and IELTS at Ajman University for Science and Technology UAE in 2003. His research and interests include designing new curriculum for struggling students whose English is a second language, developing skills namely reading and writing, and teacher development.

To have the basis for improving learning environment: “It is essential for teachers to understand the nature of reading comprehension.” (Tierney and Pearson 1994, 496). Unlike rote learning, meaningful learning presents information within a context and uses students’ knowledge. According to Ausubel (1968), learning becomes permanent only if it is meaningful. In a reading class, the instructor is requested to teach students to engage with the text in a dialogue as stressed by Grabe (1988, 56) with a purpose for reading using students’ prior knowledge and expectations of the students.

In this paper, categorized as a tip from the classroom, I would like to share a very recent lesson plan (comprising all the activities covered in class for the last 4 weeks) at ADNOC Institute, where English in the oil and gas industries for future to be technicians is a must.

LESSON PLAN

Theme: Environment

Topic to be tapped: Marine Debris

Step of the lesson: Reading

Students’ Level: Intermediate

Learning outcomes:

Short term outcomes:

- Extract meaning from pictures
- Use graphics to comprehend the structure of text
- Recall and interpret information

Long term outcomes:

- Plan a recycling program.
- Design a packaging waste separation facility.
- Design a compost facility.
- Design an incineration facility.
- Make site selection for a landfill.

Pre-reading:

Activity 1: Look at the pictures (below) and try to work with your partner to tell what happened.

Procedure: The students work in pairs or groups and try to figure out what happened and decipher the message conveyed in picture three. The instructor walks around and assists students with vocabulary items, such

Activity 3: Find in the text words whose definitions follow:

- a. the act of getting rid of something by throwing it away.
- b. things that are no longer wanted or needed.
- c. dishonest and against a law or a rule..
- d. animals and plants that grow independently of people, usually in natural conditions.
- e. a situation where one is involved in and that is difficult to escape from.
- f. the process of absorbing nutrients, medications, or objects into the body by eating or drinking them.
- g. surrounded by something.
- h. the state of having no food for a long period, often causing death.

Keys:

disposal: the act of getting rid of something by throwing it away.

trash: things that are no longer wanted or needed.

improper: dishonest and against a law or a rule. wild-life: animals and plants that grow independently of people, usually in natural conditions.

entanglement: a situation where one is involved in and that is difficult to escape from.

ingestion: the process of absorbing nutrients, medications, or objects into the body by eating or drinking them.

encircled: surrounded by something.

starvation: the state of having no food for a long period, often causing death.

Activity 4: Answer the questions given in activity 1:

Post- reading:

Activity 1: The text above contains more than 100 words. Summarize it in 60 words maximum.

Activity 2: The text does not mention the impact of marine debris on humans. Try to find some and include them in the diagram above by adding a box named “Impact on humans”.

Activity 3: Project work: What steps should be taken to reduce or prevent marine debris. Think of some solutions using pictures from the net.

The activities implemented in this lesson have enabled readers not only to predict the subject matter of the text, but also to infer meaning from context through illustrations and diagrams. Because the content relates to students’ needs and interests, the lesson was met with great enthusiasm. Simply put, when students are taught how to extract information from what they read and feel that in every act there is a purpose, they become strategic and lifelong readers.

References:

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Tierney, R. J., and P. D. Pearson. 1994. Learning to learn from text: A framework for improving classroom practice. In Rudell, Ruddell, and Singer 1994, 496–513.