

The Effective Use Of Reading Logs As Continious Assessment In Reading Classes

Aslonova Hurriyat Ibodullayevna

EFL teacher of Uzbekistan State of World Languages University
asl_hurriyat_05@mail.ru

Abstract: Reading logs are widely used in contemporary EFL teaching as they regularly accompany the development of reading comprehension in the early stages of English language learning. Students become good readers through reading, and gradually develop reading strategies how to focus of attention on the meaning rather than the language of the text while reading long texts or large quantities for general understanding, with the intention of enjoying the texts. In this article I will discuss the effective use of reading logs as continuous assessment in order to encourage students to read as well as to expand their language skills through extensive reading.

Key words: reading, reading log, reading comprehension, reading strategies, extensive reading, EFL classroom

Introduction

It is known that reading logs are used in teaching foreign languages in higher education as it offers a lot of benefits both for teachers and learners. Most EFL teachers use extensive reading approach to develop writing skills through reading logs based on the selected novels or stories. Preparing reading logs are required as continuous, mid course and final assessments of the reading courses which are one of the sub-courses of the modules of Pre-service Teacher Training (PRESETT) Curriculum in Uzbekistan. The course Reading is taught for 6 semesters within three academic years at the university. Each syllabus and assessment specifications of the course Reading set aim, objectives, indicative content, approaches of teaching and learning, learning outcomes and assessment specifications. During

each semester students have to fulfill several tasks based on their reading over the semester as a part of continuous assessment.

Materials and Methods

There are three reading logs during the semester 1. Each reading logs equals 15% and each reading test is based on critical report to various new texts. Texts should be from feature articles, stories and poems.

Reading log 1: Reflection on what I like to read

For this entry you will have to write a reflective paragraph (no less than 100 words) addressing the following issues:

- What do you usually read in English?
- How often do you read?
- Do you like/dislike reading? Why?

(taken from *Assessment specifications: Reading1, semester 1*)

Reading Log 2: Critical report on stories and a poem

For this entry you will have to read 4 short stories (2 pages minimum in length) and 1 poem and write a critical report for each story and the poem. Include the following points in your report:

- What did you read (title, author)?
- When did you read (how long it took)?
- Brief summary of the story or the message of the poem
- Is the story/poem worth reading? Why?

(taken from *Assessment specifications: Reading1, semester 1*)

Reading Log 3: Critical report on feature articles from newspapers and magazines

For this entry you will have to read 5 feature articles and write a critical report for each article. You can take feature articles from newspapers and magazines in print (for example, The Times, The Week, EL Gazette, Uzbekistan Today) or get them from on-line newspapers and journals (for example, Guardian, UzReport,

BBC World). In your report include the following points:

- What did you read (title, author, newspaper/magazine, date of issue)?
- When did you read it?
- How long did it take you to read it?
- Brief summary of the article
- Is the article worth reading? Why?

(taken from *Assessment specifications: Reading1, semester 1*)

There are various reading logs during the semesters. Students write from simple to complicated reading logs. There are different ways of completing reading logs. Extensive reading logs involve reading long pieces of text. As learners read, their attention and interest vary – they may read some parts of the text in detail or they may skim through other parts. Extensive reading is rapid reading for main ideas of a large amount of text. For extensive reading log students have to fulfill several tasks based on their reading over the semester as a part of continuous assessment.

Reading Log 1: Critical review of an extract from a novel

For this entry you will have to read extracts from a novel or short story (50-100 pages minimum in length) and write a critical review. Include the following points:

- Title and author of the novel
- Brief summary of the novel
- Reflection on the novel
- Critical analysis of the novel

Criteria for critical review of a novel extract:

- Ability to give a brief summary of the plot
- Reasons for enjoying or disliking the story (e.g., plot convincing or not, identifying with characters or not, relevance of “message” in the story)
- Recommendation for another reader

(taken from *Assessment specifications: Reading2*)

Reading Log 2: Critical review of professional article

For this entry you will have to read and write a critical review of a professional article. You can take professional articles from magazines in print (for example,

English Teaching Professional, Modern English Teacher) or on-line

(e.g. www.teachingenglish.org.uk). In your review include the following points:

- Title, author, magazine, date of issue or URL and date accessed
- Brief summary of the article
- Critical comments on the article

(taken from *Assessment specifications: Reading2*)

Reading Log 4: Review report

For this review report you will have to choose a novel (see suggested novels for reading) and write a review report (minimum 500 words) focusing on the social, cultural and historical background of the novel. In your report include the following points:

- What did you read (title, author)?
- Brief summary of the plot.
- Identify social, cultural and historical background of the novel and give evidence from the novel.

(taken from *Assessment specifications: Reading3*)

According to Shen (2009), reading logs share the narrative quality of text types and many students have reported positively on their usefulness. Denne-Bolton (2013), reading logs in particular are used in higher education, probably because it is assumed that students usually engage in personal note-taking without being required to do so. Most students believe that writing reading logs will help them to

develop language skills, acquire the knowledge of world and broad their horizons by reading. It means that extensive reading opens windows on the world seen through different eyes.

Experiences show that vocabulary is not learned by a single exposure. Reading allows for multiple encounters with words and phrases in context thus making possible the progressive accretion of meanings to them. By presenting items in context, it also makes the deduction of meaning of unknown items easier. There have been many studies of vocabulary acquisition from extensive reading (Day et al 1991, Nation and Wang 1999, Pigada and Schmitt, 2006). Michael Hoey's theory of 'lexical priming' (Hoey 1991, 2005) also gives powerful support to the effect of multiple exposure to language items in context.

There is a well-established link between reading and writing. Basically, the more we read, the better we write. Exactly how this happens is still not understood (Kroll 2003) but the fact that it happens is well-documented (Hafiz and Tudor 1989) Commonsense would indicate that as we meet more language, more often, through reading, our language acquisition mechanism is primed to produce it in writing or speech when it is needed. (Hoey 2005).

Conclusion

In conclusion, the researches on language learner reading show how reading logs help both learners and teachers to develop the language. Reading logs offer us a lot benefits where it helps to develop learner autonomy, enhances language competences, increases motivation of gaining world of knowledge and vocabulary growth, improves writing skills and motivation for reading books all the time.

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