

Exploring the Effectiveness of Applying Active Reading Strategies in ESL Classrooms to Enhance Reading Comprehension of Learners

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Reading is indubitably an indispensable skill to master in the process of acquiring the English language for it provides learners the exposure to the target language whilst honing their lexicon, expression of ideas, grammatical knowledge, etc. Yet merely answering a set of questions after spending much time translating difficult words to one's native language which happens in most ESL classes does not adequately facilitate reading comprehension. Thus, this study intended to explore the effectiveness of applying active reading strategies in ESL classrooms to enhance the reading comprehension of learners. The objectives were to identify and implement active reading strategies in authentic ESL classes and to explore learners' perspectives on the use of these novel approaches. The primary data were accumulated from 160 students from the University of Ruhuna via group interviews, structured questionnaires, and participant observation. Secondary data were collected from books and research articles. The acquired data were analyzed both qualitatively and quantitatively. The researcher implemented the active reading strategies, scanning, skimming, critical reading, predicting, inferencing, summarizing, discussing, frontloading vocabulary, and choral reading in the ESL classroom. The respondents confirmed the researcher's observation that their exposure to the above reading strategies followed by constant practice assisted them to comprehend reading materials better and they sparked their interest to read more in English. Moreover, the majority stated that choral reading helped them practice pronunciation while frontloading vocabulary made them focus on the meaning of texts during reading sessions without having to focus much on decoding the words in texts. In conclusion, active reading strategies assist to enhance reading comprehension of learners.

Keywords: Active reading strategies, Reading comprehension