

**The methods I used and the roles I played in teaching reading
to standard 3 and 4 at BIAM Laboratory School**

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to standard 3 and 4 at BIAM Laboratory School**

A report

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Thank You

Chapter 1: Introduction

To fulfill one of the most important graduation requirements at BRAC University I was supposed to do a thesis or an internship. I had decided to do an internship because this teaching experience will help me in the future as I want to be a teacher. The school I had chosen for my internship program was BIAM Laboratory School which is one of the renowned schools in Bangladesh. I started my internship on 9th September and ended on 6th December, 2012. BIAM Laboratory School used *English for Today* and *Oxford Reading Circle* to teach English paper I to the students of standard 1 to standard 5. The books were considered to teach all the four skills (reading, listening, writing and speaking). However, I decided to teach reading with the books to the students of standard 3 and 4. This is because, both the books contain several reading texts and the tasks are based on those texts. My report will describe my experience in teaching reading to the students of standard 3 and 4 at BIAM Laboratory School. In particular, the methods that I used in teaching reading and the roles that I played while teaching are described in this paper.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

This chapter begins with the definition of reading. Then, it describes different sub skills of reading, some reading practices, approaches and activities that are required to improve reading skills. After that, it describes some methods that are used to teach a foreign language. At last, some essential aspects of teaching such as evaluation, adaptation, motivation, feedback, error correction are explained.

2.1 Definition of Reading

Different scholars have defined reading according to their perspectives. Richard, Platt and Weber (1987) said “Reading is a way of perceiving a written text with a view to comprehending its subject matter (p. 238). By this statement the authors defined reading as a way of understanding a written text. Also, reading is a “cognitive process” because learners acquire this skill or comprehend the written texts through their ideas, understanding, knowledge and perceptions (Cook, 2008, p. 71).

2.2 The Types of Reading Sub Skills

There are some sub skills of reading. People develop these skills through reading a variety of texts. For instance, the skill “predicting and guessing” is involved when a person is reading a novel. Moreover, the skill “reading for general understanding” is emphasized when a person is reading a newspaper. Harmer in *The Practice of English Language Teaching* discussed different sub skills of reading that learners developed while reading. The skills are:

- **Identifying the topic:** Good readers are able to pick up the topic of a written text very quickly. They do it by using their background knowledge, experiences and intuitions.

- **Predicting and guessing:** In many reading materials the writers keep the real story hidden till the end. In these cases, the readers use their prediction and guessing power to understand the text.
- **Reading for general understanding:** Efficient readers are able to understand the gist of a text. While reading the text they do not stop for every detail. They try to understand the general meaning of it. This skill is needed when the learners are asked to do a task on the basis of the general understanding of a text.
- **Reading for specific information:** Sometimes readers read a text only for particular information. This skill is important because in many situations readers may need to find specific information and if in those situations they keep on reading in detail they might not be able to find the specific information.
- **Reading for detailed information:** Readers often have to read a text for detail information. For instance, to understand a recipe one has to read every single detail of it.
- **Interpreting text:** Writers do not always imply all the meanings in the text. It is the reader who extracts the inner meanings of the text and interprets accordingly.

(Harmer, 2003, p. 201-202)

2.3 Reading Practices

2.3.1 Reading Aloud and Silent Reading

Teachers apply different reading strategies in class to enhance comprehension process of the students. The most common practice in teaching reading to young learners are reading aloud or oral reading and silent reading. Silent reading is a kind of reading where the learners are supposed to read silently. Oral reading refers to the types of reading where the learners read aloud (Richards, Platt & Weiber, 1987, p. 238). In *Practical English Language Teaching* Neil Anderson talked about these two kinds of reading and he took his position for silent reading. Anderson (2003) said “Comprehension is the goal of reading so focus should be on getting meaning from print” (p. 69). It means silent reading helps the students to understand the text more than oral reading because they can focus on the text independently and identify the unknown words without any interruption. Whereas, reading aloud hampers their comprehension process as they have to pay attention to someone else who is reading the text loudly. Therefore, Brown (1994) said “concentration on pronunciation interrupts reading speed and students lose their attention while others are engaged in reading orally” (p. 312).

Sally Gibson said against the disadvantages of oral reading. Gibson (2008) said “reading aloud can be used successfully by reducing the number of audience and the length of the text” (p. 29). It means by fulfilling these conditions teachers can encourage students to read aloud a text.

After the above discussions on silent reading and reading aloud it can be said that oral

reading is effective for the beginners because they need assistance from their teachers to understand the text and without reading aloud it is impossible for the teachers to locate the points where the students have difficulties. In addition to that, to improve pronunciation oral reading is unavoidable. Silent reading is good for advanced learners because with a good command on the language they can comprehend the text smoothly.

2.3.2 Skimming and Scanning

A reader does not always read at a same speed. Reading speed while reading a novel is different from reading a journal article because of the different reading purposes.

Readers use “skimming” strategy to get an overall idea of the text. Hedge provided a definition of skimming. In skimming, largely top-down processes are used to get the general dimensions of a text (Hedge, 2011, p. 195). Grellet said (1996) “when we read, many words or expressions are simply skipped; we go back to check something or forward to confirm some of our hypotheses” (as cited in Paran, 1996, p. 26). Moreover, Scrivener (1994) said “It is mainly concerned with findings key topics, main ideas, overall theme, basic structure etc. A typical skimming task would be some general answers questions from the teacher” (p. 184). In skimming, learners attempt to find the answers quickly, by going through only some of the portions of the passage. On the contrary, readers use “scanning” strategy to get specific information. Scrivener (1994) said “It is involved with details of the text, the way that a reader finds those details involves processing the whole text” (p. 184). Learners need to choose the reading strategies on the basis of their purpose of reading. Harmer (1998) stated “Whether readers scan or skim depends on what kind of text they are reading and what they want to get

from it" (p. 69).

2.3.3 Extensive and Intensive Reading

In *Learning Teaching: A Guidebook for English Language Teachers* Jim Scrivener discussed two types of reading that readers use to read a variety of text. In our daily life, we tend to use extensive strategy. Scrivener (1994) said "Extensive reading is a kind of fluent, faster reading of longer texts, for pleasure, entertainment and general understanding, but without careful attention to the details" (p. 188). Extensive reading has a powerful impact on language learning. As readers follow extensive reading for the purpose of amusement or pleasure, they gain knowledge in vocabulary and sentence patterns without realizing the fact (Scrivener, 1994, p. 188).

Intensive reading is mainly used for academic purposes. In classroom students use intensive reading because they are required to process the reading text in such a way so that they can solve the comprehension questions or other exercises. Scrivener (1994) said "Classroom works involve intensive reading" (p. 188). Intensive reading is "classroom oriented" where the learners mainly focus on the linguistic and semantic details of a reading text to pick up the specific points (Brown, 1994, p. 312). It means in intensive reading the readers read carefully and as closely as possible for an in depth understanding of the text. Scrivener (1994) said "This involves going back over the same and usually short text a number of times to find more and more in it, making sure that the words have been correctly interpreted" (p. 188).

2.4 Reading Approaches

There are different approaches of reading. Harmer in *The Practice of English Language*

Teaching discussed these approaches of reading.

2.4.1 Bottom-up Approach

In bottom-up approach readers start with the smallest unit (phones, sounds, letters etc) and end with the largest unit (words, sentences, paragraphs etc) to comprehend the text. When a reader reads a text by analyzing every single sound, letter, word, sentence for understanding the text, it is called the bottom-up approach to reading (Harmer, 2003, p. 201). Neil Anderson talked about an advantage of bottom-up approach. Anderson (2003) said "One element of bottom-up approach to reading is that the pedagogy recommends a graded reader approach" (p. 70). By this statement the author meant the materials of reading in this approach are designed in such a manner that the students encounter with the easy vocabulary items first and then moves on to the difficult ones. It is an important point of bottom-up approach because teachers usually follow this procedure to design materials. Anderson quoted Goodman's statement where Goodman criticized bottom-up approach. According to Goodman (1988) those who follow the bottom-up approach for reading are the 'word callers' because they can surely know all the meaning of the words in a text but cannot comprehend the text properly (as cited in Anderson, 2003, p. 71).

2.4.2 Top-down Approach

It is the opposite of bottom-up approach. In this approach the readers start with the larger unit and then move on to the smallest unit to arrive at a meaning of the text. In this approach it is thought that comprehension depends on the reader. The approach where readers use their background knowledge, previous experiences and predictions for understanding the reading text is called top-down approach to reading (Richard, Platt and Weiber, 1987, p. 296). It means in

this approach understanding the sounds, letters and words are not important. Readers with the help their schema comprehend the whole text. A passage can be comprehended even if some words in it cannot be understood (Anderson, 2003, p. 71).

2.4.3 Interactive Approach

The combination of both top-down and bottom-up approach is called interactive approach of reading. In this approach extensive and intensive reading are equally emphasized. Anderson (2003) stated "reading is an interactive process of both bottom-up and top-down processes. While reading readers follow both of these two approaches simultaneously" (p. 73). That means efficient readers combine these two approaches equally to comprehend the text. While reading if readers encounter unknown vocabulary items they use bottom-up processes to decode it. On the contrary, in the same reading text they can find a situation where they have to use their previous knowledge to understand the text. In this way readers use or combine both of the approaches to comprehend a reading text.

After analyzing the approaches it becomes clear that there is no particular approach to comprehend the reading texts. Sometimes analyzing every detail can be very useful to understand a text and sometimes general impression helps the readers to comprehend the text better. Also, in some cases approaches depend on the readers. Harmer gave an interesting example. If a lawyer attempts to follow the top-down approach to read a scientific journal, he will not understand the journal. He has to follow the bottom-up approach as he needs to understand every detail (Harmer, 2003, p. 201). In addition to that, a reader who is reading a text in the native language usually uses top-down approach. But, the same reading text can be

read in bottom-up approach by a non native reader. So it can be said that, the use of approaches is not only depends on the type of the texts but also on the readers.

2.5 Schema Theory

In comprehension process the role of background knowledge is termed as schema. Carrell and Eisterhold talked about schema theory and its importance in understanding a reading text. According to schema theory a text written or spoken does not carry meaning by its own, it only shows the readers or the listeners the path by which they are able to construct the meaning by using their previous knowledge (Carrell & Eisterhold, 1983, p. 556). This statement specifies proper comprehension requires the ability to relate the textual information to one's own knowledge. Furthermore, Hedge considered reading as an interactive process between the reader's background knowledge and the text. Hedge (2003) said "The total reading process is 'an interplay among the various kinds of knowledge that a reader employs in moving through a text" (p. 189).

Background knowledge is very important in comprehending a text as with the help of it, decoding the meaning of a text becomes easier for the reader. Harmer (2003) said "Without right kind of pre-existing knowledge, comprehension becomes much more difficult" (p. 189). Moreover, Carrell and Eisterhold included Coady's observation on the importance of background knowledge in comprehending a reading material. Coady said "Background knowledge helps learners to comprehend text even if he or she has syntactic difficulties" (as cited in Carrell and Eisterhold, 1983, p. 554). For example, the learners whose native language is English are able to comprehend an English text faster than the students with other native languages. It happens because those who have English as their native language can easily

relate their background knowledge with the text which aids to capture the hidden implications of the text. The teachers should motivate the second language learners to use their background knowledge to understand a text. The teachers can ask the students to share their views about the topic or theme of the text (as cited in Gower, Philips and Walters, 1995, p. 95).

2.6 Reading Activities

Reading activities are necessary to comprehend a text as well as to develop the reading skills. Gilakjani and Ahmadi (2011) stated "Reading activities can promote interpretation of the text through the interaction between the reader and the text and thus plays vital role in schema activation in order to comprehend and interpret the text better" (p. 143).

There are mainly three types of activities in reading. Ajideh (2003) stated "reading as a comprehension or understanding process involves three stages (pre-reading, while-reading, and post-reading)" (p. 6).

Pre-reading Activities

Pre-reading activities are those which are given to the learners before reading the text. They are important to grab the learners' attention on the reading text (McDonough and Shaw, 2003, p. 95). Moreover, Yusuf (2003) said "these types of activities basically set ideas about the approaching text" (p. 1452). Pre-reading activities help the readers to activate their schematic knowledge. According to Ringler and Weber pre-reading activities are 'enabling' activities, because they trigger readers' background knowledge to comprehend the reading material (as cited in Yusuf, 2011, p. 1452).

While-reading Activities

While-reading activities are those activities which are given to the students during reading. It also enables the learners to interact with the text and to facilitate their comprehension. Gilakjani & Ahmadi (2011) said “With these tasks teachers take the learners through the reading and they interact with the text” (p.146). The authors also talked about some while reading activities that can be implemented in the classroom. They are :

- guessing word meanings by using context clues
- scanning and skimming for specific pieces of information
- predicting text content
- identifying topic sentences that contain the main idea of the paragraph
- distinguishing between general and specific ideas
- making conclusions and drawing inferences

Post-reading Activities

Post-reading activities are those which are given to the learners after they have finished reading the text. Medina (2008) mentioned "Post-activities are tasks, in which learners, after interacting with the reading, reflect, argue and give their points of view" (p. 16). It means post reading tasks enable the learners to analyze the issues presented in the text. Moreover, according to Gilakjani and Ahmadi (2011) “In post-reading phase, the readers integrate their background knowledge into a new schema structure” (p. 146). Here, the authors intend to mean that in post-reading stage readers’ existing background knowledge is modified with a new schema structure. In this regard, Bartlett (1932) said “knowledge that we have about the world is organized into interrelated patterns based on our previous knowledge and

experiences” (as cited in McDonough and Shaw, 2003, p. 95). Wahjudi gave some examples of post-reading activities. They are creating stories, posters, reconstructing the text and writing opinions about the text etc (Wahjudi, 2010, p. 86-87).

Other Reading Activities

Ur talked about some reading activities. They are:

Listing and reordering: Learners list sequence of events or steps in correct order.

Pre-question activity: A general question is given to the learners before reading a text to help them to understand the text

Summarize: Learners summarize the main idea of the text. Also, they can correct a summary, which is full of errors.

Comparison: Learners are provided with two texts on same topic. They are asked to find out the similarities and differences among the texts.

Responding: In this activity the text is a letter and learners are asked to discuss how they will write the response of the letter.

Re-presentation of context: The text gives information or tells a story. The learners have to re-present it in their own style.

(Ur, 2005, p. 46)

2.7 Principles of Teaching Reading

Harmer in *How to Teach English* discussed some principles of teaching reading. The principles are:

- **Reading is not a passive skill:** Knowing the word meanings to understand a text is not enough. Students should also try to evaluate the points that the text reveals in order to locate whether they agree or disagree with the arguments or not.
- **Students need to be engaged with what they are reading:** Students who are not interested or engaged with the reading text and task will be less benefited from it.
- **Students should be encouraged to respond to the content of a reading text, not just to the language:** The message of the text is important. Teachers must give students an opportunity to respond to that message. It is important because it provokes personal engagement with the text.
- **Prediction is a major factor in reading:** The moment we see the book cover, the headline, the word processed page our brain starts predicting what we are going to read. Teachers should give students ‘hints’ so that they can predict what is coming.
- **Match the task to the topic:** The most interesting text can be undermined by asking boring and inappropriate questions. In contrast, the most common text can be made really exciting with imaginative and challenging tasks. So, the teachers should be aware about designing tasks.
- **Good teachers exploit reading texts to the full:** It will not make sense if the students only read a text and then drop it to move on to something else. Teachers should give them scopes to utilize the text. Good teachers integrate the reading text into interesting class sequences, using the topic for discussion and further tasks.

(Harmer, 1998, p. 70)

2.8 Methods of Teaching

There are some methods of foreign language teaching that teachers follow to teach and guide the learners and to make the lesson plans. The methods are:

2.8.1 Grammar-Translation Method (GTM)

The main characteristic of this method is exactly as its name suggests. It focuses on learning the rules of grammar and their application in translating passages from one language to other. Larsen and Freeman (2000) said “Grammar-Translation Method believes that learner should be taught how to translate literary texts from native language to target language or vice versa and the grammar of the target language” (p. 19). In GTM learners become skilled in the target language with the help of native language because the classes are taught in mother tongue, with little active use of the target language.

A negative aspect of GTM is it does not focus on the communicative skills. Only reading and writing skills are focused. Larsen and Freeman (2000) said “the ability to communicate in the target language is not a goal of foreign language instruction. The primary skills to be developed are reading and writing” (p. 16). But, to acquire a foreign language completely we need both receptive and productive skills equally. Yet GTM is in vast practice and even popular in many countries. Brown attempted to explain why this method is still employed. Brown (1994) said,

“It requires few specialized skills on the part of the teachers. Tests of grammar rules and

of translations are easy to construct and can be objectively scored. On the part of students, as the tests do not attempt to evaluate their communication skills, they have little motivation to go beyond the grammar analogies, translations and rote exercises” (p. 21).

Larsen and Freeman in *Techniques and Principles in Language Teaching* discussed the techniques of Grammar-Translation Method. Some of the techniques are given bellow:

- **Translation of literary passage:** Learners are required to translate reading passages from target to native language and vice versa.
- **Reading comprehension questions:** Students have to answer in the target language based on their understanding of the text.
- **Antonyms and synonyms:** Students are provided with a set of words and required to find out the antonyms and synonyms of those words.
- **Deductive application of rules:** Rules of grammar of the target language are explained first and then the examples of the rules are given.
- **Fill in the blank:** Students are provided with a series of sentences with missing words and asked to fill the blanks with the new items of vocabulary that they have learned.
- **Memorization:** New items of vocabulary and their meaning in native language or vice versa are given. Students are asked to memorize the bilingual lists.
- **Use of words in sentence:** Students have to make sentences with the new items of vocabulary.

(Larsen-Freeman, 2000, p. 19-20)

2.8.2 Audio-Lingual Method (ALM)

In ALM, habit formation and over learning are focused. This method believes if the learners practice more, they will learn the language better. Larsen and Freeman (2000) said “Learners should try to overcome the habits of their native language and form the new habits that are required to acquire the target language” (p. 35).

The positive side of this method is, unlike GTM, grammar is taught inductively, through examples and drills. Larsen and Freeman (2000) said “The learning of a foreign language should be the same as the acquisition of the native language. We do not need to memorize rules in order to use our native language” (p. 44). In contrast, the negative side of ALM is, it is a “teacher dominated” method. The teacher presents a new dialogue in which the grammatical rules are implemented. Students practice those dialogues with the teacher and when they will over learn those dialogues they start to produce those dialogues. Larsen and Freeman (2000) said “The teacher should be an orchestra leader- conducting, guiding and controlling the students’ behavior in the target language” (p. 44). ALM can be upgraded by reducing some roles on the part of teachers and by involving the students more in the production stage. The techniques of Audio- Lingual Method are:

- **Repetition drill:** Students are asked to repeat the teacher’s model as accurately and as quickly as possible.
- **Dialogue memorization:** Dialogue or short conversations between two people are often

used to begin a new lesson. Students memorize the dialogues through mimicry.

- **Transformation drill:** Teacher provides a sentence that must be turned into something else. For example, a question to be turned into a statement, an active sentence to be turned into a passive statement etc.
- **Question and answer drill:** This drill allows students to practice with answering question and students should answer very quickly.
- **Complete the dialogue:** Selected words are erased from a dialogue that students have learnt. Students have to complete the dialogue by filling the blanks with the missing words.

(Larsen-Freeman, 2000, p. 47-49)

2.8.3 Communicative Language Teaching (CLT)

CLT emerged as a response to the drawbacks of GTM and ALM. It believes communication should be the ultimate goal to learn a second language. Larsen and Freeman (2000) said “Being able to communicate is required more than mastering the linguistic structures” (p. 121). Unlike ALM, it believes students should be proficient enough to communicate in the real world. Larsen and Freeman (2000) said “Communication in the target language in real context is the main idea and teachers’ main responsibility is to establish situations which are likely to promote communication” (p. 125). Teachers do not interrupt students while they are communicating, even if there are grammatical, lexical or pronunciation errors. Techniques of the Communicative Language Teaching are:

- **Role play:** Students are given different social context or different social roles on which they have to perform. Wilkins (1976) said “..... students within a given context perform certain functions, such as promising, inviting and declining invitations” (as cited in Larsen and Freeman, 2000, p. 121).
- **Scrambled sentence:** The students are given a passage in which the sentences are in a scrambled order. They are told to unscramble the sentences so that the sentences can be restored to the original one.
- **Picture strip story:** One student in a small group was given a strip story. He/she showed the first picture of the story to the other members of his/her group and asked them to predict what the second picture can be.

(Larsen-Freeman, 2000, p. 133-134)

2.9 Evaluation of Teaching Materials

Teachers evaluate materials to make the language learning effective. Nuttall (2000) stated “teachers need to evaluate the texts for the development of reading skills of the learners” (p. 170). Davies (2006) agreed with the statement as he said “Teachers need to evaluate the reading texts so that it can engage the learners physically, emotionally, socially and intellectually in learning the new language” (p. 7). Nuttall also pointed out three main criteria for evaluating texts. They are:

- **Suitability of the content:** The reading texts or the topic of the texts have to arouse interest among the learners. In other words, this criterion checks whether the reading materials

are appropriate to the learners' current level or not.

- **Exploitability:** This criterion determines whether the reading texts provide the learners the scope to exploit it so that they can develop their reading skills. It means a text should be flexible so that learners can utilize it properly. By exploiting a text the readers are able to extract the meaning from it which later helps them to express the theme of the text in their own words. It is important because sometimes an interesting text loses its effectiveness only due to its lack of exploitability.

- **Readability:** This criterion is for evaluating the structural and lexical difficulties in the texts according to the learners' level. A reading text can be very easy for some students and can be very difficult for some other students in the same class. So, in this situation through "readability evaluation" teachers can attempt to make an average text that will be understandable to all the students in a class. A material will be readable for a particular group of learners if the materials contain structures and vocabulary items that the learners are already familiar with. Readability is necessary while adapting a reading text because if the students are stacked with lots of unknown words, the comprehension process will be hampered which will gradually affect their reading competencies.

(Nuttall, 2000, p. 170-174)

Furthermore, McDonough and Shaw proposed four parameters to make an overall assessment to the suitability of the materials. First is "the usability factor". It checks whether the materials are suitable for a particular syllabus or not. Second is "the generalizability factor". It evaluates whether the materials are useful for a particular group of learners or not. In some

cases the materials as a whole may not be helpful for a group of students whereas some parts of it may be useful for the same group of students. Third is “the adaptability factor”. A material is flawless in terms of adaptability factor when it offers addition, deletion and modification of some parts of it for the local context, intended readers and some targeted purposes. Fourth is “the flexibility factor”. Some Materials are graded or sequenced so rigidly that cannot be integrated into various types of syllabus. These types of materials are not effective in terms of flexibility factor.

(McDonough and Shaw, 2003, p. 70)

2. 10 Adaptation of Teaching Materials

Adaptation is an extensive activity for the teachers because they change or adjust various parts of the course book to make it appropriate for the students. Sometimes materials need to be adapted to make it suitable for a particular level of students and to build up their reading competencies (Sheldon, 1988, p. 280). In addition to that, adaptation is important as Littlejohn said “Materials are internally coherent but sometimes they don’t suit the context” (as cited in Tomlinson, 2003, p. 74). So, it can be said that to meet the teaching and learning needs adaptation is required. Above all, the instructor should be aware of learner’ skills and abilities while adapting the materials. Peacock (1997) said “while adapting the materials, teachers should be careful about learners’ level, need, knowledge, interest, enthusiasm, persistence with the learning tasks, concentration and enjoyment during class” (p. 150). McDonough and Shaw (2003) proposed five ways of adaptation to make the materials suitable for the learners. They are:

- **Adding:** Teacher inserts a task or text to make the class more effective. If there is insufficient coverage of the materials teachers may decide to add supplementary textbooks or exercises (Davies, 2006, p. 5). A teacher can add more examples if the students are facing difficulties to understand a new grammatical item. Teacher can also provide practical examples, related to the real life situation to make the topic easier.

- **Deleting or omitting:** In deletion, materials are shortened by reducing the length of the text, removing specific items and unrelated exercises. Omission occurs when for a particular group teacher leaves out things that are deemed inappropriate, offensive, unproductive etc (Sheldon, 1988, p. 240).

- **Modifying:** In recent days teachers are more conscious about communicative teaching but the text books do not fulfill this requirement in some cases. So, to trigger students' background knowledge and interest teachers can occasionally modify materials to make it more communicative and demanding to the students. Tomlinson (2003) stated "Through the modification technique, teachers can make internal changes in to the context of the text, classroom activity, exercise or other pieces of materials" (p. 22).

- **Simplifying:** The instructions or explanations of the task can be made easier by simplifying. Simplification should be done in such a way that the original one does not lose its essential meaning. Simplifying can be possible in three ways which are: a) sentence structure; complex sentences are turned into simple sentences to match with the students' proficiency level, b) lexical content; teacher can use familiar words to explain new items of vocabulary, c) grammatical structure; passive sentences can be transformed into active sentences.

- **Reordering:** In reordering the sequence of the units or within the units of a course book can be shuffled to make it more effective. In other words, in some textbooks, the sequence of the chapters is not suitable for the students. So the teacher can decide to rearrange the sequences of the chapters.

(McDonough and Shaw, 2003, P. 80-83)

2.11 Motivation

Various studies showed that motivation is strongly related to achieve success in language teaching and learning. Ghanea and Pisheh mentioned (2001) “Motivation does imply some incentive that causes the individual to participate in the activity leading towards a goal” (p. 460). Students who are motivated will engage themselves completely in the language learning activity. Motivation is better than punishment. Coon and Mitterer (2007) said “punishing students is a mistake for the teachers as students learn nothing by being punished. Most of the time, it is seen that students are repeating same thing again and again” (p. 241).

There are mainly two types of motivation, instrumental motivation and integrative motivation. Gardner (1959) said learners have instrumental motivation when the desire to learn a language is based on certain practical goals, such as getting a job, passing an examination etc (as cited in Narayanan, 2006, p. 4). In contrast, the desire to learn a language in order to communicate with people from other cultures who speak that language or to identify closely with the target language group is integrative motivation (as cited in Narayanan, 2006, p. 4). These two types of motivation are varied on the basis of the learners’ needs and goals.

Kwiatkowska in her research on “Ideas on Classroom Management in YL Classes”

presented several ways of motivation. For instance, giving thumbs up, clapping and a huge smile on a teacher's face will definitely help the children to realize that they did a great job and made the teacher pleased. Also, the use of smiles, stars, stamps or stickers help to show teachers' appreciation (Kwiatkowska, 2008, p. 2).

Ur (2005) noted "for school children learning a foreign language will be well only if the teacher finds a way to encourage them to invest their effort in the learning activity" (p. 286). Teachers need to focus on the nature of motivation students have so that they can activate students' desire accordingly. Ur suggested some strategies of motivation for young learners while learning a second language. Some are given below:

- **Success and its reward:** Giving reward is very motivating. If the students complete a task successfully then they must be rewarded. Reward can be- chocolate, pencil or other educational stuffs. On the contrary, according to Pintrich teachers should not give materialistic rewards. He (1994) said "Sweets or mascots may make the young learners do quietly what you order but once you forget the reward or want to quit, their performance will decrease" (as cited in Brooks, p. 17). To avoid materialistic rewards, teachers can put up posters on the classroom wall with the students' name to show their good works.
- **Tests:** The motivating power of tests is clear as students become naturally motivated in learning a lesson when they know the upcoming test will be on that particular lesson.
- **Competition:** Learners become motivated to give their fullest not only to learn successfully but also to do well against the opponents in the competition.

2. 12 Feedback

The aim of feedback is to create self awareness among the learners regarding their performance. In the definition of feedback Gower, Phillips and Walter (1995) said “The forms of evaluation that the teachers use to make the students aware of their development in the learning of the target language” (p. 163). Feedbacks can be praise and encouragement; correcting, setting regular tests, having discussions about how the group as a whole is doing, giving individual tutorials etc (Gower, Phillips and Walter, 1995, p. 163).

Feedbacks that are given to learners have two main distinguishable components: assessment and correction. In assessment, the learner is simply informed about how she/he has performed. In correction, specific corrections are provided to the learner’s mistakes (Ur, 2005, p. 99). This definition of feedback signifies feedbacks help the students not only to have a clear idea on the lessons but also to have a definite concept about their improvement or progress. However, some teachers think that feedback is not an important part of teaching. Nunan (1998) reported “adult learners in Australia viewed feedback as a very important factor in learning, whereas their teachers did not value it as highly” (as cited in Gower, Phillips and Walter, 1995, p. 164).

Moreover, feedback should be given on time to help the students to do better in the learning process. Keller (1983) said “teachers’ feedback should be most efficiently utilized; it needs to be provided not only at the end of the activity, but also at the onset of a similar subsequent activity” (p. 31).

Richards and Lockhart (1997) said “Feedback can be either positive or negative and may serve not only to let learners know how well they have performed but also to increase

motivation and to built a supportive classroom climate” (p. 20). Both positive and negative feedbacks are important depending on certain facts. Positive feedback is effective for the young learners as they always want to hear how well they have performed. On the other hand, negative feedback is useful for the adult learners as they are eager to take their performance one step further. The authors also provided some strategies of giving feedback. They are:

- **Acknowledging the correct answer:** Teacher expects the answer by saying ‘Good’, ‘alright’.
- **Indicating an incorrect answer:** Teacher indicates the wrong answer by saying ‘No’, ‘Mmm’.
- **Praising:** Teacher gives complements by saying ‘wonderful’, ‘Well done’.
- **Expanding or modifying students’ answer:** Teacher rephrases an incomplete answer.
- **Repeating:** Teacher repeats the same answer.
- **Summarizing:** Teacher summarizes what a student or group of students have answered.
- **Criticizing:** Teacher criticizes a student’s response.

2.13 Error Correction

Errors are natural outcome of the learners while learning. Students learn from their errors. Gower, Phillips and Walters (1995) said “By making errors students are testing out their ideas

about the language also they are experiencing” (p. 164). Error correction has been viewed differently in different methods. ALM suggests errors should be corrected immediately otherwise it will be a part of the habit. On the other hand, in CLT the major role of the teachers is to give students an opportunity to express their ideas and opinion by using the target language. Errors are tolerated and seen as a natural outcome in the development process of communication skills. Errors are ignored in this method because this approach is working on fluency, the teachers did not correct the students’ error, but simply noted the error, which he will return to at a later point (Larsen and Freeman, 2000, p. 132). There are three ways of correcting errors. They are:

Self-Correction

Self-correction occurs when learners correct errors on their own without the help of the teacher. Teachers can involve learners in self-correction to different degrees, by giving learners more or less guidance about the location and nature of their errors. Lyster (2001) mentioned “Teacher's elicitation process draws learners' attention to correct-incorrect mismatches and facilitates self-correction which is effective than the teacher's recast or explicit correction” (as cited in Katayama, 2007, p. 76). Self-correction is favored by the teachers as it involves the students more in the classroom (Katayama, 2007, p. 76). It makes the learning process effective as Gower, Phillips and Walters (1995) said “If learners are aware of their errors, they can be a successful language user” (p. 164).

Peer Correction

Peer correction is a technique of error correction where the fellow learners correct each other

errors. Gower, Phillips, and Waters (1995) said “If a student cannot get it right, it is possible because he/she may not know the right answer. So, with a gesture, hold her attention and get another student to help his/her out” (p. 165). A study by Maize in 1952 tried to compare the effect of outside correction by the teachers with in class correction by both peers and teachers. Students undergoing the latter procedure did improve significantly (as cited in Witbeck, 1976, p. 322).

Teacher Correction

When neither self-correction nor peer correction is effective, the teacher has to do the corrections. It is an important technique because sometimes it happens that none of the students know the correct answer. Then, the teacher has to correct it for the whole class. Students cannot correct themselves, especially, when they do not know what the error is and what the right answer of it will be. They need assistance from their teacher to initiate self-correction (Gower, Philips and Walters, 1995, p. 167). Gower, Phillips and Walters said “Students have more faith in their teachers and therefore, teacher correction helps the learners to correct their errors without any doubt” (p. 167). Teachers should do the corrections on time so that the errors cannot be inhabitant in the learners.

Chapter 3: My Experience and Suggestions

This chapter begins with a short description of the school. Then, it describes the ways I taught reading to the students. After that, it explains how I implemented different methods to improve the students' reading skills. Lastly, it describes the roles that I carried out to help the students to comprehend the reading texts. Basically, this chapter shows the practical implementation of theories that I have discussed in chapter 2.

3.1 Background of the School

Bangladesh Institute of Administration and Management (BIAM) is an associate of Bangladesh Civil Service Administration Association. It has been engaged in human resource development of the nation in its humble way since its inception in 1992. BIAM Laboratory School (BLS) was an initiative of BIAM in the field of education of the country. The first BLS was established in March, 2000. Now, it has 32 branches all over the country. I did my internship at Dhaka branch. BIAM Laboratory School is an institution devoted to developing young minds to their fullest potential through the creative pursuit of knowledge. Alongside, teachers of the school are firmly committed to helping young learners in their charge to become responsible and worthy citizens of our country. They promise to fulfill these aims by adopting an array of innovative academic and extra-curricular activities such as singing, dancing, drawing etc. Their expectation is to create high capability among the students for creative thought, logical expressions and a lifelong love of learning so that they will become the valuable asset of the society.

It follows the English version of the national curriculum. The national curriculum of our country has two versions, one in English and the other in Bangla. The books that are used in both the versions are same. The only difference that is observed is in the language of those books. In English version all the books are written in English but the book that is used to teach the subject “Bangla” is written in Bangla language. In contrast, in Bangla version all the books are written in Bangla but the book that is used to teach the subject “English” is written in English language. The students of BLS had five major subjects- Bangla, English, Math, Computer Science and Social Science. There were separate teachers for each subject. The subject, English, had two parts, English paper I and English paper II.

The school starts its academic activities at 8.00 am and ends at 12.30 p.m. There were five sections for each standard. I used to teach in two sections, one from standard 3 and one from standard 4. A teacher named Tahmina Haque used to take the classes in these sections on English paper I. I was assigned to take classes in place of her. Therefore, I observed her classes for the first two days of week 1 and perceived some ideas on how students learn a lesson. She was very helpful. She showed me the ways of teaching to the students of beginner level. She provided a demonstration about the suitable gestures, postures, facial expressions that I used while taking the classes. There were 23 and 33 students in standard 3 and 4 respectively.

3.2 Teaching Reading

The syllabus of the course was pre-set by the school authority. My duty was to teach the students according to the syllabus and finish it before the exam.

Before teaching a new lesson I used to start with a warm up session. It helped me to grab students’ attention and to engage them in the upcoming reading text. In the warm up session I

asked several questions, mainly related to the topic of the text. It was done to activate their schemata. In this regard, Wallace (1992) said “the texts and the reading tasks should give maximum support to the second language learners’ current linguistic and schematic knowledge” (as cited in Paran, 1996, p. 27).

Then, I read aloud the text along with its explanation. After that, some students were randomly chosen to read aloud and explain the text again so that everyone could understand it better. Reading aloud brought a positive outcome in my class because of the length of the texts. In this regard Gibson (2008) said “reading aloud can be used successfully by reducing the number of audience and the length of the texts” (p. 29). Reading aloud also improved students’ pronunciation. In contrast, in silent reading students got more time to read and understand the texts. Anderson (2003) said “the main goal of reading is comprehension, so silent reading is best suited for this goal” (p. 69). But in silent reading it was very difficult to recognize who was actually reading. So, before giving the exercises I used to ask few question to check their understanding.

I gave exercises to evaluate their reading skills such reading for detailed or specific information, predicting and guessing from context etc. They liked the exercises that can be done through skimming as in those tasks they did not have to spend extra time and effort. But, I tried to give tasks that students had to do through intensive reading so that they can have an in depth understanding of the text. Scanning exercises were not preferable to them because they had to pay constant attention while reading the text. Most of the time, they tried to read the text extensively. As a result, often it had been seen that students failed to do the simple exercises. In this regard, Eskey (1988) suggested “to solve reading exercises successfully L2 readers have to attend more to bottom up processes than L1 readers, since their restricted linguistic ability will

make it more difficult for them to use the contextual cues that L1 readers use” (as cited in Paran, 1996, p. 27).

However, top-down approach helped them to do the meaning based activities (such as writing a short summary). The approach where readers use their background knowledge, previous experiences and predictions for understanding the reading text is called top-down approach to reading (Richard, Platt and Weiber, 1987, p. 296). The students of both the classes were good at guessing from context. The students of standard 4 could deal with unfamiliar words. Besides, I gave “hints” to the students of standard 3 so that it helps them to predict. Here I followed one of the principles of teaching reading given by Harmer (1998) which is “prediction is a major factor in reading”.

So, it can be said that my students used interactive approach to comprehend the reading texts and to do the tasks. Some of the examples of the lesson plans are given bellow:

Lesson Plan

(Day 4, Week 2)

Lesson:	The President (a story)
Book:	<i>Oxford Reading Circle</i>
Date:	25 Sem 2012, Tuesday
Time:	10.30am-11.10am
Duration:	40 minutes
Numbers of Students:	33
Medium of Instruction:	English
Sub Skill:	Reading for specific information
Physical condition of the classroom:	A medium size classroom with table, whiteboard, benches

Learners' Profile:

Age: 10-11 years

Class: Standard 4

Level: Beginners

Cultural and Language Background: Bangladeshi student with Bangla L1

Aim: To make the students able to gather particular information from the text.**Objectives:**

- 1) Students will identify the portions of the text where the required information could be.
- 2) Then, they will read that portions to collect the specific information.

Teaching Aids: White board, Marker.**Lesson Procedure:**

Stage, duration and type of interaction	My Activities	Students' Activities
1) Warm up session: 4 minutes, whole class	1) Tried to activated students' background knowledge by asking several questions 2) Specially, said them to think about their favorite president in the world.	1) Responded to my questions
2) Pre-reading activity: 6 minutes, individual work	1) Told the students to make five points to describe that person. This activity was given only to make the students engaged in the class. 2) After that, I asked some of them to share the points.	1) Wrote some points and said them.

3) While-reading activity: 16 minutes, individual work	1) Gave them some scanning based questions. So that, they will read the text carefully. It will help them to find the particular information.	1) Wrote answers to the questions.
4) Post-reading activity: 9 minutes, individual work	1) Gave some true false exercises. The true false questions were such, that students cannot do the task if they read the text through skimming.	1) They had to read and collect the specific information to do the exercise
5) Feedback and error correction: 5 minutes, whole class	1) Collected and checked their copies 2) Suggested to read attentively.	1) knew their mistakes

Problem:

1) Some of the students were not able to realize which portions they should read to find out the information.

Solution:

1) I had to guide them to read the text carefully.

Lesson Plan**(Day 3, Week 4)**

Lesson: The farmer and the magic goose (a short text)

Book: *English for Today*

Date: 03 Oct 2012, Wednesday

Time: 9.30am-10.10am
 Duration: 40 minutes
 Numbers of Students: 33
 Medium of Instruction: English
 Sub Skill: Reading for general understanding

Physical condition of the classroom: A medium size classroom with table, whiteboard, benches

Learners' Profile:

Age: 10-11 years
 Class: Standard 4
 Level: Beginners

Cultural and Language Background: Bangladeshi students with Bangla as L1.

Aim: To make the students able to have a general idea about the text.

Objective: Students will read the text through skimming.

Teaching Aids: White board, Marker.

Lesson Procedure:

Stage, duration and type of interaction	My Activities	Students' Activities
1) Warm up session: 5 minutes, Whole class	1) Tried to engage the students by asking several questions such as do they like pets, what type of pet they like most etc.	1) Shared their liking or disliking.
2) Pre-reading activity	1) No task was given	
3) While-reading activity: 10 minutes, individual Work	1) Told the students to read the first two paragraphs of the text. 2) Asked them whether they	1) Read and tried to understand the text. 2) Tried to come up with possible conclusions.

	<p>have understood it or not.</p> <p>3) Asked them to think and say what can be the conclusion of the story.</p>	
<p>4) Post-reading activity:</p> <p>15 minutes, individual work</p>	<p>1) Wrote a substitution table on the board.</p> <p>2) Instructed them to make 6-7 sentences from the table in their copies.</p>	<p>1) Made possible sentences from that table</p>
<p>5) Feedback and error correction:</p> <p>10 minutes, whole class</p>	<p>1) Collected and checked their copies.</p> <p>2) Explained the incorrect sentences</p>	<p>1) Realized their errors and knew the right answers.</p>

Problem:

1) Though the text was very easy, students were not taking the tasks seriously.

Solution:

1) I motivated them to participate by offering rewards.

Lesson Plan

(Day 2, Week 8)

Book: *Oxford Reading Circle*

Lesson: Everyday Things (a poem)

Date: 19 Nov 2012, Monday

Time: 8.50am-9.30am

Duration: 40 minutes
 Numbers of Students: 33
 Medium of Instruction: English
 Sub Skill: Interpreting the text

Physical condition of the classroom: A medium size classroom with table, whiteboard, benches

Learners' Profile:

Age: 10-11 years
 Class: Standard 4
 Level: Beginners

Cultural and Language Background: Bangladeshi students with Bangla as L1

Aim: To make the students able to extract the inner meanings of the text.

Objectives:

- 1) Students will gather ideas that are implicitly described in the text.
- 2) They will try to think creatively by using their imagination.

Teaching Aids: White board, Marker

Lesson Procedure:

Stage, duration and type of interaction	My Activities	Students' Activities
1) Warm up session: 3 minutes, whole class	1) To relate the students with the text I asked them to say about their everyday life.	1) Responded and shared their views.
2)Pre-reading activity: 2 minutes	1) Said them to make a list of things that they use in their daily life as the text is about the use of everyday things.	1) Made a list.

individual work	This task was given to make the class interesting.	
3) While-reading activity: 10 minutes, individual work	1) Told the students to read first few lines of the text. 2) Then told them to see how many things that are described in the text have matched with their list.	1) Wrote down the name of the things that have matched.
4) Post-reading activity: 15 minutes, individual work	1) Instructed them to write 5-7 sentences based on what they think the writer of the text wanted to say.	1) Wrote by using their interpretations and imaginations.
5) Feedback and error correction: 10 minutes, whole class	1) Collected their copies and made corrections mainly in the content. 2) Cleared the opposite or wrong interpretations. 3) Explained the main theme of the text.	1) Tried to understand their mistakes and the actual theme of the text.

Problems:

- 1) Some students made wrong interpretations.
- 2) Some were failed to express their thoughts properly for lack of vocabulary.

Solutions:

- 1) I gave them some hints to realize the hidden meaning of the text.
- 2) I planned to give some vocabulary exercises in the next class.

3.3 The Methods I used in Teaching Reading

I used eclectic method, as my means of teaching. Eclectic Method is the amalgamation of different methods, like CLT, GTM and ALM. I preferred this because it was not always possible to conduct a class using single method. I felt to bring a positive outcome from the foreign language teaching, the teaching methods should be changed according to the need of the texts and tasks. The examples of the use of different methods in different situations are given bellow.

3.3.1 Grammar-Translation Method

Making sentences with words is one of the techniques of GTM. Larsen and Freeman (2000) said, “in order to show that the students understand the meaning and the use of a new vocabulary items, they make up sentences in which they use the new words” (p. 20). In the first class in week 7, in standard 3 after teaching the word meanings I asked the students to make at least one sentence with the words that were given as their home work.

In a revision class on poem in the last class in week 8, I divided the students of standard 3 in 10 pairs. The poem had 10 lines. I wrote the first line on the board. The order of the words of the line was not in the correct form; even some of the spellings were also incorrect. I called one pair to come to the board and correct the line. In this way, I wrote all the lines of the poem on the board and selected the pairs randomly to do the corrections. I used GTM because the students were required to memorize the poem and the spelling of the words.

In GTM we use mother tongue as a medium of instruction. Larsen and Freeman (2000) said “Learners are required to translate reading passages from target to native language and vice versa” (p. 19). Some reading passages were difficult for my students because of some unfamiliar

words and sentence structures. So, I explained those words and sentences in L1 to make them understand. Also, often I told the students to read a passage and translate it in L1.

3.3.2 Audio-Lingual Method

In the first class in week 7, 10 words along with its meanings were given in standard 3. The words were from a short story of *Oxford Reading Circle*. Before teaching the story, I made the students understand the meanings of some difficult words of it so that in the next class they could comprehend the story easily. I wrote the words with their meanings on the board and the students copied those in their copies. Then, I said the words loudly one by one along with their meanings and the students repeated it after me. This was done several times, quickly and accurately so that the students could remember the meanings better. Repetition drill was used to teach the word meanings. Larsen and Freeman (2000) said “Students are asked to repeat the teacher’s model as accurately and as quickly as possible” (p. 48).

On the first day in week 2 in standard 3, I taught a lesson titled “Mahbub’s Mother”. It was a short lesson and students could easily comprehend it because it did not have any difficult words or sentence structures. I asked them some short questions from the text to check their understanding. Here, I used question-and-answer drill of ALM. Larsen and Freeman (2000) said “The drill gives the students practice with answering questions and students should answer very quickly” (p. 49).

Though, ALM is a teacher-dominated method I tried to use it as less as possible. As my students were in primary level they needed to be controlled and direction should be shown to them, the use of ALM could not be ignored completely. I preferred CLT more than ALM to make the class more communicative and interactive.

3.3.3 Communicative Language Teaching

Larsen and Freeman (2000) said “The students are given a passage (text) in which the sentences are in a scrambled order. They are told to unscramble the sentences so that the sentences are restored to their original order” (p. 133). In the sixth week in standard 4, I told the students to rearrange some sentences. I gave ten sentences. The outcome of the task satisfied me as maximum number of students came up with the appropriate answers.

In one of the principles of CLT Larsen and Freeman (2000) said “Students should be given an opportunity to express their ideas and opinions” (p. 126). After teaching a reading text I asked some of my students to share their views about it. I asked them some questions which they had to answer in the target language. Most of the time they failed to answer the questions. Initially, I thought that they did not understand the text but later I realized that they were not comfortable in sharing their own views in the target language. There were some limitations regarding this issue. I noticed that the students were habituated with GTM rather than CLT. “Memorization”, a common principle of GTM, was in vast practice among the students. Even the teachers of the school were not likely to change it. I saw them selecting some questions from every short story to prepare an answer sheet. Then they provided the sheet to the students for memorizing the answers. In the exam only the questions that were in the sheet were given. So, the students without knowing or understanding the text could easily answer the questions. It encouraged them to learn blindly that ultimately affected their creative power and decreased their communicative skills.

So, I think that students should not be provided with such kind of sheets. In my opinion, the outcome would be better if they were asked to answer the questions orally. While they would be

answering the questions orally teachers could correct it and make necessary changes. Then the students would be asked to write those answers in their copies. In this way the class would be more interactive. In addition to that, the students would have a clear idea about their progress.

3.4 The Roles I played while Teaching Reading

Language learners do not always need teachers. Learners can learn on their own at home with books, CDs, cassettes, computer programs, video tapes or just by living and communicating in a place where the language is used. In class also they can learn with the help of other learners and through self study and class works (Scrivener, 1994, p. 15). But I think that there are some roles of a teacher that the learners by themselves cannot play, especially, if they are young. As my students were young, I had to perform those inevitable roles both inside and outside the classroom. They were:

3.4.1 Materials Evaluation

Tomlinson (2003) affirmed “an evaluation takes into account the users of the materials and makes judgment about the effect of the materials on the people using them” (p. 16). It means teachers need to evaluate the materials in terms of the learners’ abilities. There were two books under English paper I for both the standards. One was *English for Today* and the other was *Oxford Reading Circle*. *English for Today* contained poems, letters, short stories and pictures with short descriptions and dialogues, which were organized into different chapters. *Oxford Reading Circle* had several stories. The books fulfilled “usability” and “generalizability” factor as they were designed particularly for the young learners.

English for Today was suitable for the students as it was specially written for their learning purposes. That is why, the content of the lessons matched with the context in which the students live in. “Suitability of the content” was clearly maintained in this book. For example,

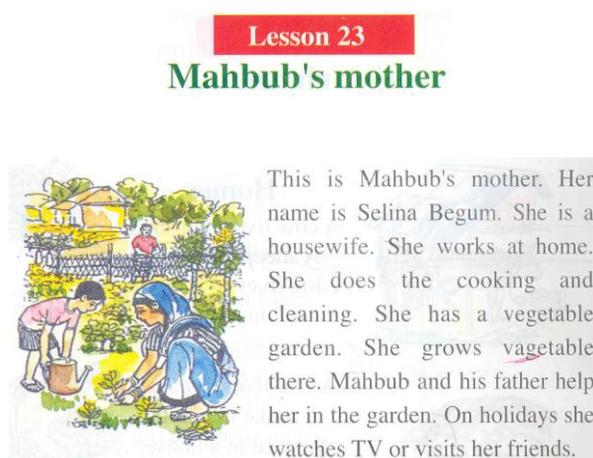


Figure 1: Lesson 23 (p. 62) of *English for Today* of standard 3.

However, I felt that *English for Today* should be improved in terms of “exploitability”. The reading passages did not provide learners sufficient scope of questioning and interacting with it. When a passage is about a new topic or theme we question and interact with the subject matter for a better understanding. But, the stories in this book were very much familiar. For example,

Lesson 28

Kamal's bedroom

This is Kamal's bedroom. It is not so big. There is a bed near the window. There is a bookshelf in one corner. There is a desk and a chair in the other corner. There is a lamp on the desk. There are some books on the desk too. There are two pictures, a calendar and a clock on the wall.

Figure 2: Lesson 28 (p. 62) of *English for Today* of standard 3.

There were variety of tasks in *English for Today* like true false, fill in the blanks, multiple choices, making sentences, answers questions and matching etc. The tasks were comparatively easy. As I proceed further from lesson 23 for both the standards, there was no alteration in the difficulty levels of the texts. The learners could easily skim through the passages and find the answers. The answers were directly given in the passages. For example,

Lesson 32

A Thirsty Crow

A. It was a hot summer day. A crow was very thirsty. He flew from one place to another in search of water. But there was not a drop of water anywhere. All the ponds and ditches had dried up. The crow flew a long distance and was tired. Suddenly he saw a pitcher under a tree. The crow flew down and sat on the pitcher. He looked into the pitcher. The pitcher had a little water. But the crow could not reach it. He looked around and saw some pebbles. He picked up the pebbles one by one with his beak. He dropped them into the pitcher. Soon the water came up to the mouth of the pitcher. The crow drank the water and flew away happily.

Moral : If there is a will there is a way.

New words :
Thirsty, search, distance, pebbles, ditch, pitcher.

AI. Circle the right answer.

- Who was thirsty?
 - a cow
 - a crow
 - a dog
- What was the crow flying for?
 - food
 - tree
 - water
- What was in the pitcher?
 - water
 - pebbles
 - nothing

2. Fill in the blanks.

- It was a hot summer day.
- All the ponds and ditches have dried up.
- A crow was very thirsty.
- He flew here and there in search of water.
- Suddenly he saw a pitcher.
- The crow flew down to the pitcher.

Figure 3: Lesson 32 (p. 78-79) of *English for Today* of standard 4.

On the other hand, the stories of *Oxford Reading Circle* had some difficult words and sentences which created difficulty for my students. I had to simplify words and sentence structures to reduce their difficulty levels and to increase “readability” of the passages. Moreover, at the bottom of every page some words were given along with their meanings. These

words were taken from the stories. It facilitated the comprehension process of the students. For example,

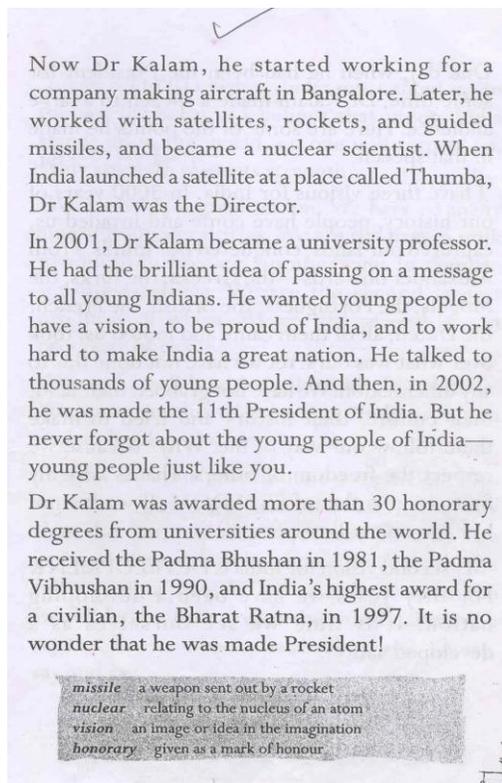


Figure 4: Story 19 (p. 147) of *Oxford Reading Circle* of standard 4.

There was enough visual support for comprehending the reading texts in both *English for Today* and *Oxford Reading Circle*. For example, figure 1 and 3. Goodman (1967) said “this is done on every cognitive level, including an optical cycle, readers do not have to decode every letter or word: instead, they reconstruct the text according to the graphic cues they have sampled” (as cited in Paran, 1996, p. 25). Visual cues help the learners to comprehend the texts.

The tasks of *Oxford Reading Circle* were better than the tasks of *English for Today* as the learners got an opportunity to use their capabilities while doing the tasks. Also, they had to use scanning strategy to solve the tasks. For example,

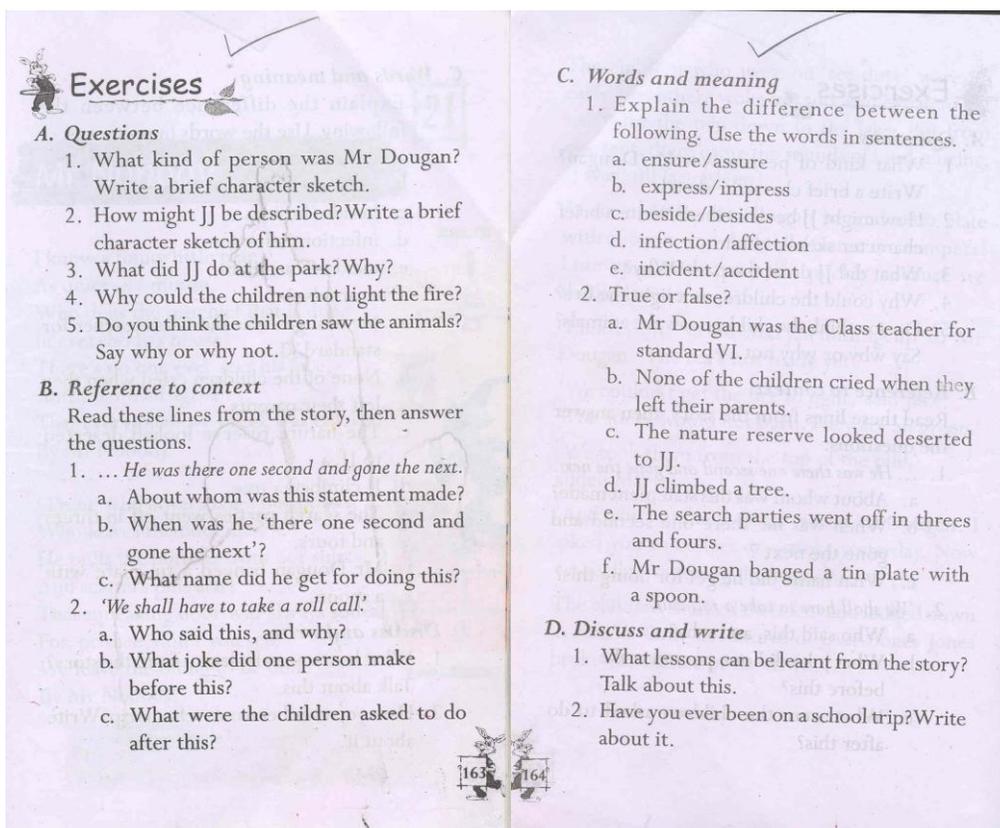


Figure 5: Story 20 (p. 163-164) of *Oxford Reading Circle* of standard 4.

After evaluating the books I think that, the authors of the books could include group or pair works. There should be some pre-reading or while-reading activities. The texts should be written in such a way that it can trigger students' background knowledge sufficiently. The tasks in *English for Today* could be more on critical thinking and opinion based as it makes the class interesting and interactive. Also, the length of the reading passages of this book could be increased. On the whole, the improvement in the difficulty level of the texts and the tasks is

important as it helps the learners to develop their abilities and skills further. Therefore, it can be said that both the books had some positive aspects as well as some negative aspects.

3.4.2 Adaptation of Materials

I think that adaptation of materials is one of the most important decisions that the teachers have to make. The teachers have to adapt the materials according to the level of the students, their interest, capacity and the context in which the materials are going to be used. In order to fulfill these requirements, the techniques of adaptation I used in class were:

- **Adding a grammatical exercise:** In the last class of week 8, the students of standard 3 were asked to do a fill in the gap exercise. The exercise focused on subject-verb agreement. As they were facing problems in it and the course books had no activities on subject-verb agreement, I had to design an exercise to overcome their difficulties. Before giving the exercise I explained briefly about subject-verb agreement to the students. I wrote the sentences on the board. The students had to copy the sentences and fill the gaps. Some of the examples are given bellow:

Ben and Jane _____ (is/are) playing.

My brother _____ (play/plays) football.

I _____ (were not/ was not) sick.

- **Omitting tasks from a reading text:** In the last class of week 1 in standard 4 I taught a story titled “The President” from *Oxford Reading Circle*. I observed that the students were very reluctant about the topic. They were paying less attention to understand the

text. I even used L1 to make them understand yet their interest could not be activated. The responses from them were not satisfactory. It was because considering their level the story was unfamiliar. They did not have sufficient schemata to comprehend the text. Also, it contained many unknown words. So, I deleted two tasks from the text which were “explain the words in your own words” and “reference to context”.

- **Modifying the context of a text:** I taught a lesson titled “The Complaint” from *Oxford Reading Circle* to the students of standard 4 on the first class of week 5. The lesson focused on how to write a “complain letter” to the concerned department. In the book a woman was complaining about a “shower shield”. I rewrote the context of the letter to make it more communicative and interesting to the learners. In place of “shower shield” I wrote “watch”. The letter was written by a boy of the students’ age. I chose “watch” because the other day I asked them to think about a product and most of them said watch.
- **Simplifying an exercise:** In the first class of week 6 in standard 4 I gave them an exercise in reordering sentences. I observed that most of them could not do the task properly. So, I simplified the activity. Then, I told them to do it. I reduced the length of the sentences. Also, the complex sentences were rewritten into simpler ones. For example:

a) The boy named peter was a good boy as he saved the birds.

Peter was a good boy.

Moreover, I simplified the grammatical structures of the sentences by converting passive sentences into active ones and past tense into present tense. For example:

a) The book was read by me.

I read the book.

b) Mahbub's mother **grew** vegetable in the garden.

Mahbub's mother **grows** vegetable in the garden.

Also, I simplified the lexical content of some sentences. I tried to keep a balance between old and new vocabulary items. For example:

a) Did he see a **pitcher** in the field?

Did he see a **bottle** in the field?

b) How many **pebbles** does he collect in his pot?

How many **stones** does he collect in his pot?

I gave examples from their daily activities or daily life. For example, "class/in/ I/ read/ do/what/ in/ school. The answer will be "In what class do I read in school". At last, it can be said that the course books supported "the adaptability factor" as I was able to apply the adaptation techniques to make the reading passages and reading tasks more suitable to the learners.

3.4.3 Monitoring

The classes had a few number of students (23 and 33 students in standard 3 and 4 respectively). As a result, class works could easily be monitored both discreetly and actively. Scrivener (1994) said

“Discreet monitoring is when you maintain a presence in the room, but do not overtly offer help, interfere, correct, etc. Whereas the teacher who is actively monitoring will be walking around, viewing and helping to different students and frequently interfering, giving advices and corrections” (p. 94).

It means, in “discreet” monitoring the teacher does not help until the students ask for help. In contrast, in “active” monitoring teacher helps the students without their request for help. Active monitoring was mainly for shy or introvert students. I observed that, they had many problems and did a lot of mistakes but never asked for my help by themselves. I had to go to them to solve their problems and mistakes. Discreet monitoring was effective for sincere or extrovert students who asked for my help directly if they did not understand the instructions or the tasks.

Group or pair works were monitored by “Participate” monitoring to ensure that all the students in a group or pair were working equally. In the definition of “participate” monitoring Scrivener (1994) said “In some group works teachers sit down and join a group (temporally or for the whole task) and take part as if they were one of the group members, offering ideas, helping with questions, joining in discussions” (p. 94). During “participate” monitoring I was well aware that students were not being interrupted by me.

Sometimes teachers want students to work without any help so in such cases they leave the classroom for a few minute. It is called “Vanish” monitoring (Scrivener, 1994, p. 94). It was not suitable for my students because they were young learners. Most of the time, they needed help from me. Also, they trend to make noise if I was not present in the class.

3.4.4 Motivation

The students of standard 3 were eager to engage themselves in the tasks. It seemed they wanted to portray a positive image about themselves. In other words, some were extremely competitive to each other while some were reluctant to participate. Ur (2005) said “learners will often be motivated to give their best not for the sake of learning itself but in order to bear their opponents in the competition” (p. 278).

The students of both the standards had one thing in common which was they were always enthusiastic in giving answers orally rather than writing. To motivate them to write I had to give rewards, like chocolate. Rewards motivated them to participate more and finish the tasks early. When I gave them homework I used to say that the homework would be marked, so that they would take it seriously. Also, when the students completed the class work properly they were given “stars” or “happy faces” on their hand or in the copy. It motivated them a lot as I noticed that they did well in the next classes as well. For example, a slow learner named Raonak who usually could not finish her task on time, tried a lot and got the stars during one of the classes. In this regard, Ur (2005) said “learner who was rewarded for the success in the past tasks will be more willing to engage with the next one” (p. 278). Above all, Kwiatkowska (2008) mentioned in her research that “teachers should praise students especially young students” (p. 3). In one revision class I asked one of the students of standard 4 to read and translate a text. Though, he could not do it properly but he tried. So, I said “excellent” and clapped for him. I noticed that he became active in the following classes.

On the other hand, Ur (2005) said “learners who know they are going to be tested on specific materials next week will normally be more motivated to study it carefully” (p. 278). In one class

while teaching a text I said that it is very important for their final exam. I observed that they became very attentive instantly.

Though Coon and Mitterer (2007) said “punishing students is a mistake for the teachers as students learn nothing by being punished (p. 241), I found that punishment worked well to control the class. It was necessary to punish the students sometimes because they made noise in the class and some of them were very naughty. If the students did not maintain discipline or did not follow any rules such as timely submission of homework, class work I gave them punishment like standing outside the class or in front of the class facing the board, detention after the class, extra homework etc.

3.4.5 Feedback

Feedbacks were given not only at the end of the activity, but also during the activity. Written feedbacks on the students’ written work were given. I also gave feedback outside the class if a student showed a really bad performance. I informed them which areas they should improve. This was done so that the students did not feel offended in front of the whole class. I often gave marks to motivate my learners. I noticed that, the students of standard 3 preferred direct “marking” instead of “grade” such as A / B. It was easy for me to give marks because most of the exercises were in MCQ form.

The types of feedback I used were proposed by Richards and Lockhart (1997):

- **Acknowledging the correct answer:** When the students could say the right answer of any question I said good, very good, right, well done etc.

- **Indicating an incorrect answer:** When they could not say the answer I used to say, not right, try again, emmm, pay attention etc. Also, as negative comments I said improve pronunciation, work hard etc.
- **Praising:** I gave compliments by saying yes, absolutely right, fantastic, excellent answer etc. Kwiatkowska (2008) said “nothing works better than a decent amount of praise” (p. 2).
- **Expanding or Modifying:** I provided more information or I rephrased the incomplete or vague answer of the students. For example,

Student: Mahbub’s mother grows vegetable.

Me: Mahbub’s mother grows vegetable in her garden.
- **Repeating and Summarizing:** I said what a student had just said in his/her response. If I got a right answer from the students I summarized that answer so that it becomes clearer to the whole class.

My feedbacks created a one way interaction between me and the students. As they were young learners, they did not acquire the capabilities to respond back to my feedbacks. So, peer feedback was preferred to foster the communication among the students. I thought that it will ultimately create a two way interaction. But, I realized that it was not fruitful for my learners as they did not trust on their peers and took their comments negatively. They took it seriously, when the same comments were given by me. Also, unlike advanced learners, it was difficult for them to give peer feedback.

3.4.6 Error Correction

There are some types of error correction that I have discussed in chapter 2. I used those types to correct my students' error.

I was concerned about explaining the errors that I corrected so that the students could understand it. As my focus was on reading skills, I often told the students to summarize the text in short (4 to 5 sentences). For this kind of task I used both oral and written correction. Teachers use written correction especially for written activities to develop content, organization proficiency, grammatical accuracy in short to improve the overall quality of a student's writing whereas oral correction is mainly used for the incorrect utterances of the students in the communicative activities (Sheen, 2007, p. 257). I corrected their errors orally when they delivered the answers orally. Immediate corrections were not always given as I thought it would hamper their fluency. I corrected the errors in their copies when they were asked to write the answers on it. For example,

Student: The young storks were delighted.

Me: The young storks were ~~delighted~~^{frightened}. (Written correction)

Another example,

Student: The storks had built a nest on the first house in the village.

Me: Not in the first house. It will be the last house. (Oral correction)

In their script I did not make too many corrections as it would disappoint them. Moreover, Katayama (2007) noted "Self-correction was favored by the students" (p. 76). I observed that, most the students could realize their errors and wanted to do self-correction. For example,

Student: Abul Kalam was born in Chennai.

Me: Can you repeat what you have said? (Giving her a chance to realize the error and self-correction)

Student: Abul Kalam was born in Tamil Nadu.

Peer correction also took place. I used this technique based on the consideration that one student's correction of another student's error will expand the former's understanding on the answer of the question (Witbeck, 1976, p. 322). When one student could not give an answer to my question, I asked another student to help him out. For example,

Me: What will be in the blank? (Showing a sentence on the board)

Student 1: Ben is the brand name of chocolate.

Me: Are you sure?

Student 1: (Remain silent)

Me: Can you give me the answer? (Asking another student)

Student 2: Toblerone is the brand name of Chocolate.

Me: Good.

Above all, I used gestures to show an error has occurred. For example,

Student: The first vision of Dr Kalam was development.

Me: I moved my head from left to right.

Student: The first vision of Dr Kalam was freedom.

However, Harmer (1998) said “it is important that students understand the gestures and you should use the same gestures each time to represent the same thing” (p. 167). So, in case students did not realize the error through the gesture, I explained the error to them.

Chapter 4: Conclusion

The teaching experience that I have gathered throughout my three months internship program has improved my knowledge in ELT methodology as I had to apply different methods in different situations. Besides, I realized that, teachers' role is very important to teach at beginner level students as they need to be monitored in the class and motivated in the learning process. Moreover, I understood that, how I should evaluate and adapt the reading materials to make the teaching and learning process effective. Also, I came to know the ways of giving feedback and correcting errors to handle the problems and difficulties of the students. On the whole, I have enjoyed my internship period. It was a great experience for me. I believe that, this experience will facilitate my goal of becoming a good teacher in the future.

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