Exploiting texts

Focusing on language awareness
Contents

- Introduction
- Exploiting texts
- Language awareness
- Tasks
- Conclusion
Influences – learner independence

- explicit learner-centered approaches,
- cognitive sciences,
- individual study skills,
- research into good language learner characteristics,
- humanistic approaches to language learning,
- and social changes
Reasons for using texts

- to provide opportunities for the development of reading or listening skills
- or as a vehicle for the presentation and/or practice of grammatical structures or lexical sets.
Conditions for selecting texts

• topic,
• interest,
• exploitability,
• readability,
• political correctness,
• cultural suitability,
• appearance.
Text characteristics

- interesting for students,
- at an appropriate level,
- potential for language work,
- background knowledge,
- desired lexical items,
- syntactically appropriate and well organized,
- addresses discourse phenomena,
- manageable length,
- type size and font.
Teacher’s role

- provide students with a reason for reading,
- to introduce the topic or text,
- to break up the text into manageable chunks,
- to decide how many times the students will read the text,
- to deal with new language,
- to ask guiding questions.
Ways of exploiting reading texts

- predict the content or brainstorm ideas or vocabulary on the topic
- set relevant tasks before reading or listening, (focus on the global level)
- encourage SS to guess and anticipate
  - 1st reading
- get feedback
  - 2nd reading
- more intensive reading (focus on the language)
- follow-up activity (discussion or a written task)
Simple texts - expansion

can be expanded by students adding:

- adjectives in front of every noun,
- adverbs in front of verbs
- additional sentences of their own;
- or they can insert extra clauses, which the teacher presents in a jumbled order, into the most appropriate places.
Longer texts - reduction

- can be reduced to an exact given number of words (e.g., to exactly 250 words),
- or the total number of sentences can be reduced by 50%.
On the basis of a list of key words from the text, which the teacher presents in jumbled order, the text can be reconstructed by the students.
Deletion

- The first sentence of each paragraph, (which is usually also the topic sentence and summarizes the main idea), can be deleted from the text and given to the students in jumbled order to be matched with the appropriate paragraph.
Text transformation

- retold in another person (e.g., in the first person), or from the perspective of a different character in the story;
- a newspaper item can be presented as a TV news item, or
- an informal text can be transformed into more formal register or vice-versa.
Deduction

- The beginning and the end part of each line can be omitted and the central part of the text that remains is used for the whole story to be deduced from the given bits and compared to the original at the end.
Word partnerships

Before bringing the text to class, the teacher can find several useful word partnerships and write the first part of each combination down on the left-hand side of the handout for the students to find a matching counterpart in the text.
After reading the text

(& getting familiar with new vocabulary)

• students prepare a given number of their own questions about the text (comprehension check) individually or in groups to be answered from memory.

• The text quiz can be organized by having groups swap their sheets and answer each other’s questions.
Students‘ reactions to the text

- teacher prepares a list of sentence beginnings for the students to complete after reading the text:
  e.g., What I found most interesting/boring/surprising/useful/incredible/amusing… in the text was…

They can also discuss their reactions in groups.
Different texts - retelling

- SS retell the stories in their own words
- SS describe the text and their reactions to each other.

The beginning frame can be provided:
“I was reading this (article, story) the other day and it was really….What it said was…”
What is language awareness?

- Language awareness can be defined as explicit knowledge about language, conscious perception and sensitivity in language learning, language teaching and language use.
- Language awareness issues include exploring the benefits that can be derived from developing a good knowledge about language, a conscious understanding of how languages work, of how people learn them and how they use them.
Awareness-raising activities

Language awareness activities present a sequence of tasks designed to raise and guide the students’ awareness of a range of metacognitive processes underlying reading in a foreign language and gradually develop their own awareness of how the language is used through discoveries which they make themselves.
Key features – basic principles

- Language is rich, complex and diverse
- Talking about language is valuable
- LA has *cognitive* and *affective* dimensions
- LA work is logical and rational
- LA work is educational and functional
- SS become autonomous explorers of language,
- SS develop their analytical powers
The tasks:

- analyzing the text and specific sentences within it
- comparing the data in the text with previous knowledge, relating sources
- identifying specific features of the language point, classifying or sorting
- sharing perceptions, explaining, answering
- negotiating joint responses by participants.
Processes

should comprise questioning, discussing, introspecting, analogizing, consulting, guessing, hypothesizing, reflecting, brainstorming, and visualizing.
Some ideas for LA tasks based on texts

- Students match sentences with appropriate verb structures (e.g. Find examples of the infinitive of purpose, direct or indirect speech, the passive voice…)
- Students comment on the possible difference in meaning and grammatical form between sentence pairs (e.g., The Present Simple vs. Continuous)
Some ideas for LA tasks based on texts

- Students look for instances of grammatical structures (e.g., reported/direct speech, active/passive voice, etc.) and discuss the reasons for their use;
- Students explain the reasons for the use of a particular grammatical structure;
Some ideas for LA tasks based on texts

- Students write out the active voice counterpart for each of the passive voice sentences and discuss what differences in meaning or effects such a change brings about;
- Students write a summary of the text, identify errors in their writing by using peer correction and make appropriate changes;
Some ideas for LA tasks based on texts

- Students suggest reasons for the choices the author has made with regard to reporting or quoting speakers directly and express their preferences;
- Students consult a reference grammar for information on a grammatical structure and compare the information;
Some ideas for LA tasks based on texts

- Students read or study two texts from different sources describing the same event, phenomenon or product and look for differences in language and style;
- Students look for topic related vocabulary in the text (e.g., words related to health), consult a dictionary or internet sources for unknown words and compare what they discover.
Duggar boys help save little girl's life

(PEOPLE.com) -- It was a clear Thursday afternoon when Josh Duggar, the first of 19 children born to Jim Bob and Michelle Duggar, looked out at the highway in Springdale, Arkansas, and watched in horror as three cars crashed.

"I went out to see what I could do," said Josh, 21, whose family is featured on TLC's "19 Kids and Counting" reality show. "That's when I saw the little girl."

Six-year-old Maddye Plascensia was brought by her grandmother from the wreck into Josh's nearby used car dealership.

Josh immediately called 911 and kept the dispatcher informed as his brother, John, 20, did CPR on the unresponsive child. Both young men have experience as volunteer firefighters in their hometown of Tontitown, Arkansas.

"Having a daughter of my own, I felt such a connection there," said Josh, who is parent to 3-month-old Mackynzie with his wife, Anna, 21. "I was glad to have had some trauma training."

Josh said all the credit goes to the Springdale, Ark., firefighters who arrived to continue working on little Maddye. "I could see the emotion in their eyes," Josh says. "It was very serious."

Maddye is now in critical condition at Arkansas Children's Hospital in Little Rock -- the same hospital where Josh's premature baby sister, Josie, is in intensive care. The Duggars met up with Maddye's grateful family Tuesday night in a hospital lobby.

Proud parents

"They recognized us and were thanking us for Josh and John helping to save little Maddye's life," said Jim Bob. "I am so proud of my two oldest sons who responded so quickly in helping to save this little girl."

He added: "You pour your life into your children, and it was so encouraging that they had such a quick response and were ready to help. They made a difference."

Josh said that he believes he and John were there to help. "I don't believe in coincidences," Josh said. "I think we were in the right place at the right time because God has a plan for Maddye's life. I'm glad we were there."
People will forget what you said, people will forget what you did, but people will never forget how you made them feel.