AARA Reading Strategy

Supporting Top-Down Processes in L2 Reading

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Overview

- What is AARA?
- Background
  - Teaching Context
  - Interactive reading models
- AARA Framework
- Your Turn
AARA?

- A “pre-reading” activity >> strategy
- Ask, Answer, Read and Answer
- Aim: to support lower-level L2 readers in their attempts to relate what they already know to what they are about to read (activate background knowledge).
Observation of my lower-level EAP students:

Word-by-word approach to reading – an (over?)-reliance on e-translators (smartphones everywhere!)

and

My wish to do more reading in class and invest in the process:

- to help Ss engage more with reading
- break my usual “pre-reading routine”
- find purpose beyond “read this because this is reading class”
Comprehension of Text

“Comprehension of words, sentences, and discourse could not be simply a matter of applying linguistic knowledge. Every act of comprehension involves one’s knowledge of the world as well.”

Interactive Reading Models

World/Background Knowledge

Comprehension

Linguistic Knowledge (Decoding)
Readers:

- Ask (write) own questions based on preview of text-related information (e.g. photo, title, text source, first lines of text)
- Answer their own questions
- Read in order to find Answers to their questions in the text.
Ask

Given source, title, picture, few sentences, formulate 5 relevant questions about text (Wh-questions are best). Evaluate questions for relevance.

Your Turn 😊
Headaches

Some little man is inside your head, pounding on your brain with a hammer. Beside him, a rock musician is playing a drum. Your head feels as if it is going to explode. You have a headache, and you think it will never go away.

Doctors say that there are several kinds of headaches…

1. My question: What’s the suggestion if we have a headache?

Your Turn 😊
Example Questions
(Student-Generated )

Evaluate for relevance: According to the information given, can you reasonably expect to find answers to these questions in the text?

1. What’s the suggestion if we have a headache?
2. Why do some people never have headache?
3. When people feel headache?
4. Who is she in the picture?
5. Why some little man have headaches?
Invent plausible answers for your questions, specific enough to account for information provided

1. What’s the suggestion if we have a headache?  
   **My answer:** Have a good rest.

2. Why do some people never have headache?  
   **My answer:** I think they have a strong brain.

3. When people feel headache?  
   **My answer:** When people get stress.

4. Who is she in the picture? (no answer given)

5. Why some little man have headaches? (no answer given)
Do a first reading of the full text, with the purpose of finding answers to your own questions.

- many “relevant” questions may not be answered in text; most important that “pre-reading thinking” takes place
AARA

- alternative to textbook previewing activities (discuss topic, pre-cast questions)
- emphasizes individual reader knowledge; provides individualized **purpose** in reading through learner-generated pre-reading questions
- requires minimal preparation; simple framework is easily remembered (teachers and students)
- potentially engaging because Ss must show accountability by inventing their own questions

Goal = stimulate pre-reading thinking
More Practice with AARA

Languages and Language Diversity
Further Comments, Questions, Ideas?

Thank you!

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