

Strategies of Teaching English Prose

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I. INTRODUCTION

Prose is meant for learning a language. Teaching prose means teaching reading with comprehension. The learners are taught the skill of reading. The next step is to teach them reading with comprehension. Reading with comprehension helps the learners to acquire new vocabulary and content words. The power of comprehension can be promoted through reading and listening. Teaching prose enables the students to understand the passage, to read fluently, to enrich their vocabulary and to enjoy reading and writing. It enables the learners to extend their knowledge of vocabulary and structures and to become more proficient in the four language skills. It develops the ability of speaking English correctly and fluently.

The main aims of teaching prose are:

1. Literary enrichment and
2. Content knowledge

Reading a text for accuracy is a pre-requisite when a piece of Prose is taught. It is done with the close guidance of the teacher. It forces the learners to pay more attention to the text. It involves the profound and detailed understanding of the text. It is primarily concerned with the developing of reading strategies.

The reading strategies are:

1. Judgement
2. Reasoning
3. Interpretation and
4. Appreciation

Teaching a Prose lesson is more an exercise in accuracy. Students do not read a text only for a specific purpose of information. A text is considered suitable for scanning of information, paying attention to the writer's intentions, arguments, ideas, style, etc., The students are expected to answer all questions which involve their understanding of the text, grammar, vocabulary, writing, etc., So, teaching of prose must be based on the structural syllabus.

1. It must be interesting.
2. It should be well graded.
3. More opportunities for oral discussions before reading the text.
4. Difficult words, phrases and ideas should be clearly explained by the teacher.
5. It must have provisions for silent reading and reading aloud.

II. AIMS OF TEACHING PROSE

The main aim of teaching prose is to develop the language ability of the students. It is the intensive study of a language. The language ability helps the learners to use English language without any problem.

2.1 General Aims of Teaching Prose

To enable the students

1. To understand the passage and grasp its meaning.
2. To read with correct pronunciation, stress, intonation, pause and articulation of voice.
3. To enable students to understand the passage by silent reading.
4. To enrich their active and passive vocabulary.
5. To express the ideas of the passage orally and in writing.
6. To enjoy reading and writing.
7. To develop their imagination.
8. To prepare the students for world citizenship.

Specific Aims:

The specific aims of prose change according to the subject matter like biography, play, story and essay.

Specific Aims of a Story

1. The learners learn a few facts through the story.
2. To teach morals.
3. To mould one's character.
4. Exposure to the style of story writing.

Specific Aims of an Essay:

1. The learners learn a few facts through the essay.
2. To make students curious about the subject of essay.
3. Exposure to the style of essay-writing.
4. To arrange ideas in an organized manner.

Specific Aims of a Biography:

1. The learners are exposed to the lives of great men.
2. To mould one's character.
3. Aspiration for better things in life.
4. To inculcate in them desirable sentiments.

Specific Aims of a Play:

1. To provide opportunities for self-expression.
2. To play different roles.
3. To speak English in the conversational style.
4. To mould one's character.

III. STRATEGIES INVOLVED IN TEACHING PROSE

Prose is generally written to convey thoughts and feelings. It can be difficult to make sense of a particular style of writing because authors often leave much up to the imaginations of the readers. However, by rereading the section of text, and partaking in class discussions, teachers can help students come to an understanding of a variety of prose texts.

Teaching prose focuses on increasing student's comprehension of the material and establishing a personal connection to it. The key is to use a variety of strategies to keep students interested and involved. "Teaching Strategies" author Leif Danielson states, "As an overall teaching strategy: You should create the conditions that will elicit the behavior that you want from your class or an individual student."

Break it Up (Reading)

One of the best ways to understand prose is to divide the piece into smaller sections, and carefully reread each section until you understand. As a teacher, having the students focus on and reread a particular excerpt can help them gain further meaning than just reading the piece as a whole. Ask your students to answer questions about a small section to help them focus. The more they read the excerpt, the better they will be at picking up the key words that give emotion to the piece. Encourage students to read the material several times if needed. Repeated observation reveals what they may have missed the first time. Introduce active reading strategies at the beginning of the course. First, teach them to observe what is on the page -- the facts and answers to "who, what, when, where, and how." Then encourage them to notice patterns, connections, repetition or contradictions. Tell them to question everything and explain that a situation or item wouldn't be in the text if there wasn't a reason for it. Lastly, teach students to discover the theme of the text -- what the author intended for the reader to understand. At the beginning of the course, make sure students understand literature terminology. They will need to know what the fiction elements are (point of view, character, setting, plot, structure and

theme) and why writers use them. discuss the concepts with the students during class by using examples from the assigned readings. Give clear ideas about new words and their meanings. The meaning may be explained through 'real situations'. The purposes of expositions are:

1. To clear the meaning of difficult words, phrases & idioms.
2. To make the comprehension of the passage easy.
3. To promote intensive reading.

The teacher can read the selected passage aloud. He/She should be careful about pronunciation, words, phrases & intonation in his/her reading before the students. His/Her reading is observed by the learners and imitated. This model reading by the teachers helps the students for aural comprehension. The teacher should give instructions regarding postures and attention. The teacher should not be completely absorbed in his/her reading.

Class Discussions (Listening & Speaking)

Once the students have had a chance to read on their own, facilitating a class discussion is one of the best ways to further understanding. As students hear what their classmates felt, and thought when they read the piece of prose, they will gain another meaning for the text. Because prose is left to the reader to interpret, having a variety of opinions can be helpful in deciphering what the meaning is.

Lecturing helps students understand the material, but creating a discussion involves students more effectively. Hearing another point of view challenges them to comprehend the material deeper. During class, ask questions. According to Saskatchewan, "Effective teaching involves asking appropriate questions at appropriate times and helping students ask their own questions." Small group discussion gives shy students an opportunity to relate one-on-one. Group four or five students together and give them a long answer question to discuss. Let someone draw it randomly or use a question-and-answer form. Bring the smaller discussions back to the class by having one student report what was discussed.

Writing

One of the best ways for students to increase comprehension is to write about the story they've read. Insist upon the students to keep their Class Work books open during the lesson and have them brainstorm, list or free-write a paragraph immediately after completing the reading. Depending on the level of the class, create a form with questions to answer as homework.

Other writing assignments also enhance creative and critical thinking. Ask students to write a continuation of a short story and imagine what would happen next. Alternately, have them rewrite the ending of a short story, choosing a point in the action and changing the direction of the plot. You can also require that they change the gender, age, race or sexual orientation of a character from a story and rewrite the story or a selected scene. Assign the students a character and have them write a letter to him or her--or have the students write a letter to the author and tell him or her what they think of the piece of prose.

Act it Out; Change the Medium & Integrate Technology

Assign your students to play roles for a piece of prose fiction. Give them some time to practice their lines so they understand the emotions and thoughts of their character. This is an effective strategy because it forces students to put themselves in the shoes of the character, thus enhancing their understanding of what is conveyed in the text.

Many works of prose have been turned into theatrical performances, plays or movies. Show your students the movie in class. Changing up the medium will help the visual learners in the class to grasp the concepts revealed in the text. Also, movies tend to simplify some of the themes and emotions, which are easier to grasp.

Integrate technology into your teaching strategies. After reading and discussing a work, watch the movie version in class. If a movie hasn't been made of that book, watch a similar one to compare or contrast. View author broadcasts reading their own work or commenting on it. Assign students to make a movie about the story or novel. Patty Blome at Scholastic notes that "students develop comprehension and increase learning while researching characters, storyboarding plots and learning the art of enacting the assigned roles by translating a novel into a piece of short skit for the entire class to watch."

Giving Assignment:

Assignments to the students should be given by the teacher for the following purposes:

- a. To remember the meaning and spelling of new words.
- b. To use the words in sentences.
- c. To write the gist of the passage.
- d. To answer the questions.
- e. To do the exercises based on the taught units.

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