

## Teaching Reading Strategies: 'It Takes Time!'

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Studies in L2 reading have shown that reading strategies not only can be taught to students, but that when learners use strategies they have learnt, these help improve their performance on tests of comprehension and recall. There are many suggestions about how strategy instruction should take place in the literature on L2 reading, but few studies have been conducted on how teachers actually implement strategy instruction in their classrooms. This paper outlines a case study of how one teacher attempted to incorporate strategy training in his secondary school English reading classes. He attempted strategy training in questioning, clarifying, and predicting strategies and vocabulary recognition techniques for less proficient English students with mixed success. The teacher was successful in getting his students to achieve some metacognitive awareness of their reading processes. As a result it seems that strategy training for ESL/EFL readers is worthwhile. However, teachers, especially EFL teachers, should modify their expectations of achieving rapid success. Additionally, teachers may need specific instruction on how to implement strategy training more effectively.

## INTRODUCTION

Research in second/foreign language (L2) reading suggests that effective reading strategies can be taught and that students benefit from such instruction. Strategy training as it relates to L2 reading means that successful reading mainly depends on appropriate strategy use and that learners can improve their reading comprehension by being trained to use effective strategies. Strategy instruction develops student knowledge about the reading process, introduces students to specific strategies, and provides them with opportunities to discuss and practise strategies while reading (Janzen and Stoller, 1998). Although there are many suggestions in the literature on L2 reading as to how strategy instruction should take place (eg. Janzen and Stoller, 1998; Winograd and Hare, 1988), few studies have been conducted on how teachers, in reality, implement strategy instruction in their classrooms. This paper outlines a case study of how one teacher attempted to incorporate strategy training in his secondary school English reading classes.

## READING STRATEGY TRAINING

Learner strategies are tools that enable learners to take on responsibility for their own language learning (Wenden, 1985). The main objective of language learners using specific learning strategies is for them to solve learning problems and thus become autonomous language learners. Wenden and Rubin (1987), among others, have suggested that learner strategy training consists of first listing descriptions of strategies of successful language learners in the form of typologies and then training

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L2 language students in how to use strategies that have been identified as effective. It is assumed that once the strategies used by good language learners have been identified and listed, they can be taught to less successful language learners so that they can learn more effectively (Hosenfeld, 1979). These ideas for strategy training have also been incorporated into the teaching of second language (L2) reading.

Research on how L2 readers attempt to comprehend a text has suggested that because beginning readers depend so much on the text itself, they may rely on word for word reading and translation strategy, at least in the early stages of learning how to read in the second language (Kern, 1989). Many L2 readers are not able to use any other reading strategies and thus may stay at this level even after years of trying to read successfully in a second language. Consequently, it may be necessary to teach L2 reading students more effective methods or strategies so that they may be able to read and learn more effectively (Oxford and Cohen, 1992).

Reading strategies indicate how readers conceive a task, what textual cues they attend to, how they make sense of what they read, and what they do when they do not understand a particular text (Block, 1986). These strategies range from easy fix-up strategies such as simply re-reading difficult segments and guessing the meaning of an unknown word from context, to more comprehensive strategies such as summarizing and relating what is being read to the reader's background knowledge (Janzen, 1996). Research on the reading strategies of native English language speakers has found that good readers are better at monitoring their comprehension than poor readers, they are more aware of the strategies they use than are poor readers, and they use strategies more flexibly and efficiently than inefficient readers do (Pressley and Afflerbach, 1995). For instance, good readers distinguish between important information and details as they read and are able to use clues in the text to anticipate information and/or relate new information to information already stated. They are also able to notice inconsistencies in a text and employ strategies to make these inconsistencies understandable (Baker and Brown, 1984).

However, Kern (1997) has remarked that no strategy is inherently a 'good' or 'bad' strategy and that what works for one reader does not necessarily work for another. Additionally, Carrell (1998) has argued that the difference between good and bad reading strategies is whether the strategies are used consciously or not. For effective reading strategy training, Carrell (1998) has argued for the involvement of two key metacognitive factors: (1) knowledge of cognition, and (2) regulation of cognition. The first involves readers being aware of what strategies they are currently using as they read, and the second involves readers choosing appropriate or more effective strategies that will enable them to successfully comprehend a text. Carrell (1998) has suggested that both can be incorporated successfully in L2 reading strategy training.

Strategy training comes from the assumption that success in learning mainly depends on appropriate strategy use and that unsuccessful learners can improve their learning by being trained to use effective strategies. Research in L2 reading has shown not only that reading strategies can be taught to students, but that these strategies help improve student performance on tests of comprehension and recall (Carrell, 1985; Hamp-Lyons, 1985; Carrell, Pharis, and Liberto, 1989; Brown and Palincsar, 1989). Hamp-Lyons (1985) and Kern (1989) found that a group of students who had strategy training did better in reading than a group that did not have strategy training. Carrell, Pharis, and Liberto (1989) discovered that specific strategy training in semantic mapping and experience-text relationship (ETR) improved students' reading comprehension. However, Rees-Miller (1993) has cautioned that strategy training by itself may not be enough for successful reading comprehension.

Winograd and Hare (1988) have identified five prerequisites that teachers should incorporate for successful strategy training. For each learning strategy teachers should:

- (1) describe the strategy the students are going to learn
- (2) explain why the strategy is important and remind students about the benefits of strategy use. (If teachers teach L2 learners strategies without direct explanation and explicit teacher modelling for a short period, it is unlikely to have a long-term effect on students and therefore it is unlikely to help them develop as strategic readers.)
- (3) demonstrate how to use the strategy effectively, for example by modelling it. (Janzen and Stoller (1998) maintain that strategy instruction involves the teacher reading and thinking out loud, and also modelling strategic reading behaviour.)
- (4) point out to the students when and where a strategy should be used
- (5) teach students how they can evaluate their successful (or unsuccessful) use of the strategy.

The literature on L2 reading strategy training reviewed in this paper, has outlined research on L2 reading conducted mostly in a controlled environment. However, few studies have been conducted on how teachers actually attempt strategy instruction in their classrooms. The case study reported in this paper aims to redress the balance. It examines how one EFL teacher tried to introduce strategy instruction to his students of reading in English.

Studies on the reality of English reading lessons in Singapore secondary school schools have indicated that English language teachers have not utilized strategy training, and furthermore, that students are not familiar with strategy training.



English reading lessons during secondary school years consist mainly of reading aloud. Strategy training is seldom, if ever, used (Gupta & Saravanan, 1995; Farrell & Saravanan, 1998). Gupta and Saravanan (1995:350-351) discovered that reading lessons consisted of reading aloud, "followed by discussion of the content and then a test of comprehension. There is no mention of skills or strategies."

## THE STUDY

### CONTEXT

The study took place in Singapore. Singapore has a multilingual population of slightly more than three million people, with English used as a first language with varying degrees of proficiency from native speaker level to English as a foreign language. For the vast majority of Singaporeans, English is not their mother tongue but represents only one language in the speaker's multilingual repertoire. The teacher in this case study is a male Singaporean of Chinese decent and a fluent speaker of English. The teacher had invited this researcher to observe him teach his English reading classes as he said that he wanted feedback on his attempts to introduce strategy training in his English classes. The teacher had been a student of the researcher two years previously at the National Institute of Education in Singapore. At that time the researcher taught the Reading Methods Module to the teacher as part of his training to be an English teacher. One major focus of the module was strategy training in reading methods.

English is the medium of instruction in all schools in Singapore. It is not easy, however, to classify the type of English used in the school system because there are many in Singapore who use English as a first, second and foreign language, and a few (usually from the older generation) who do not know any English (Gupta, 1998). The school the teacher was teaching in was a government funded school and the student population were from the middle to lower middle classes. The students the teacher was responsible for teaching in the study were considered (by the teacher) to be using English as a foreign language as they had consistently scored below average results in school-administered English language tests. The students were from varied L1 backgrounds that included Malay, Tamil and Chinese. As the medium of instruction in the school system in Singapore is English, it is not possible to make assumptions about what strategies or methods students have been taught to use when reading in their first language.

### METHODOLOGY

Qualitative research procedures were used in the collection and analysis of the data (Bogdan and Biklen, 1982; Glesne and Peshkin, 1992). With this approach the emphasis in collection and analysis of data was on understanding and interpretation. For interpretation, I consulted the teacher who authenticated my interpretations. The study used qualitative methods because as Kuzmic (1993:16) has pointed out,

"quantitative research designs have tended to focus on groups of teachers and this can have some harmful consequences for understanding what specific teachers do." The full period of data collection was one semester (three months) of classroom observations. Data were collected by means of classroom observations (six hours), discussions after observations, two open-ended interviews (one at the beginning of the semester and one at the end of the semester), and this researcher's written up log. A procedure of data reduction, and confirming findings was used to analyze the data (Lincoln and Guba, 1985). The teacher read and authenticated the findings and interpretations of this report.

### FINDINGS

First, the teacher's beliefs (obtained in an interview before he began teaching his second semester) about teaching English reading are outlined. This is followed by details of the observations of the teacher's reading classes.

### THE TEACHER'S BELIEFS

This teacher found that the traditional approach to the teaching of reading in Singapore, in which students are asked to review relevant vocabulary, read the text, and answer comprehension questions (usually ten) is not effective. He discovered this during the previous (and his first) semester at the school when the students were still scoring well below average in the school-administered English reading tests. He then decided to try an alternative approach to teaching reading, the strategic instruction approach.

He said that he had been "introduced" to this strategic approach during his post graduate diploma in Education (PGDE) Reading Methods course. For this qualification, students take a 10-month program in which they experience teaching practice and theory classes. The Reading Module consists of 18 hours of instruction on Reading theory, teaching strategies and current concepts. During this module, the teacher reported that he had two hours (one class) devoted to reading strategy instruction.

The teacher said that he found that the traditional approach to reading instruction did not require the students to consider the conscious use of reading strategies. In fact, he said the teachers might be testing rather than teaching reading. When he had observed some of his colleagues teaching reading, he had noticed that they instructed the students to "read the passage and answer the ten questions that follow." The teacher noted that this was testing the students' ability to comprehend a passage but there was no teaching about how this could be accomplished. Aware of these shortcomings, the teacher decided that his class methods would have to break this usual cycle. He wanted to give the students strategies not only to be able to answer comprehension questions on a reading passage, but also to be able to understand and monitor their own reading process so that they could understand any text. The

teacher decided to emphasize the use of effective reading strategies by his students. From his reading about strategy training and his pre-service teacher training experiences, he said he wanted to teach the following strategies in his reading class this year: prediction, text structure recognition, and activation of schema by checking the students' prior knowledge of topics. This would be the first time this teacher had tried strategy instruction in his English reading classes. Furthermore, the teacher said that he had not experienced strategy instruction in his English reading classes during his own school days.

The teacher also said that vocabulary would also play an important role in his reading lessons. However, he said that he would teach the students specific strategies that they could use to develop their vocabulary bank. He would only increase the students' vocabulary bank by means of incidental teaching, and although he would sometimes explain new and difficult vocabulary, it was more important to teach students to infer the meaning of the words. Furthermore, he said he would get students to read aloud (a common method in Singapore) "only if it gets them more interested. It will get them ready for oral exam preparation only." So, this teacher was going to incorporate a completely different (and new) teaching and learning system into his instruction of English reading classes; different for the teacher as he had never tried this before, and different for the students in that they had not experienced strategy instruction before in the English classes.

#### CLASSROOM OBSERVATIONS

I observed six of his reading classes: two at the start of the second semester, two in the middle of the semester and two at the end of the semester. Each observation covered two double periods of forty minutes for each period. Excerpts from each of the lessons are provided. These excerpts (in the form of episodes) show how the teacher attempted to incorporate strategy training into his teaching of reading in English. The teacher authenticated the episodes and the interpretations that follow.

#### LESSONS ONE AND TWO

These lessons were conducted at the start of the second week of the semester. The first lesson started with the teacher stating that he was going to review comprehension methods. In this lesson the teacher tried to get his students thinking about how they usually read and how they answered comprehension questions. First, the teacher took the students through the traditional steps for reading comprehension that the students were used to. Then he attempted to introduce the strategy of prediction. The following dialogue, as outlined in episode 1, shows how the teacher tried to introduce prediction and how the class responded. The teacher makes a reference to "this usual way of comprehension" in the first line indicating that in traditional English reading classes in secondary schools in Singapore, the students are asked to read a passage, underline any words they do not understand, and then answer the

comprehension questions that follow the passage. The teacher then checks the answers and informs the students whether they are correct or not. He was trying to break this cycle.

#### Episode 1

**T:** Which pupils don't follow this usual way of comprehension?

[Most hands went up]

**T:** Who does? [3 hands up] Does it help you? [to the 3 students]

**Ss:** Yes

**T:** Today another method...try and guess what is going to happen

[The teacher writes the title of the story "The Last Dance" on the OHT]

**T:** What is the first thing that comes to mind? [No answers].

**T:** What will the next paragraph be about? [No answers]

**T:** Read next paragraph. [Teacher asks questions about it; students don't answer].

**T:** Next, read [T reads it out loud; T also asks and answers a lot of questions].

[The teacher then asked the students about their meta-cognitive skills]

**T:** What happens in your mind? Thinking, predicting.

**T:** What is the next paragraph going to be about? Read like this.

**Key:** T=teacher; Ss=students

This short exchange in Episode 1 shows how the teacher was trying to break the usual cycle of reading instruction in his class by attempting to introduce the strategy of prediction in his reading class. The dialogue also shows how he was trying to get his students to think about their reading strategies. However, he also realized that it would not be easy to introduce this strategy, and he felt frustrated that his students were not responding to prediction as a strategy as quickly as he had hoped. Nonetheless, he saw some hope as the students had told him that they had never been asked about how they read (their reading strategies) before. They said they were usually told to read the passage silently (or aloud) and answer the comprehension questions. The teacher thus felt that at least he got some response and that some of the students were becoming curious about what he was trying to do. He said that he would therefore continue with strategy training as the students needed a new approach because they had failed to comprehend passages so often before in the classes he had observed while he was on teaching practice and during his first year of teaching.

#### LESSONS THREE AND FOUR

These lessons took place in the middle of the second semester. The teacher told me before this class that he had continued with strategy training since my last visit, especially prediction. He said that he had continued with this strategy since the previous classroom observation. However, he said that he did not incorporate it into every reading lesson. The class started with the teacher asking the students to



read a passage silently. After ten minutes of silent reading he asked the students to reflect on their learning as outlined in Episode 2.

#### Episode 2

**T:** *How many used predicting?* [3 hands raised] *The rest of you...how many read each word?* [All the rest of the students raised their hands].

**T:** *I advise you to try the new methods. I can't force you but you will find it easier to answer comprehension questions. I know it works. Try it and you have a choice.*

The dialogue in Episode 2 shows how difficult it was for the teacher to break old habits of traditional reading approaches especially for less proficient readers in English. After the class the teacher said he was disappointed that the students had again not used the 'new' technique but he would keep trying. He said that he noticed a degree of resistance and he said, "Old habits die hard." It may be that weak readers tend to lock themselves into a pattern or cycle of self-doubt about their inability to read and that they cannot easily break from this. The teacher noticed that the students were using their fingers to guide their eyes across the page and he interpreted this physical act as further evidence that they were reading word for word. He also said that the students gave up easily if they encountered vocabulary they did not understand, if they did not understand the first sentence of a passage or paragraph or if they could not answer the first comprehension question. In fact, they equated failure (and mental pain) with the act of reading. The teacher remarked that the students in his class had always "groaned loudly" when he had told them that they were about to do some reading in English class.

However, during the following class period the teacher had some success teaching vocabulary using a 'new' method. The teacher started to go over the paragraph and during an exchange one student asked the meaning of the word 'snooty'. The teacher did not answer directly. Rather, he probed the students' understanding by asking if any word or words came up in the previous sentences that may have enabled them to guess the meaning? The teacher then continued to ask the meaning of other words in the passage and the students responded enthusiastically.

Moreover, he said he had planned a vocabulary exercise at the end of the lesson but saw a chance to do it at that time as the students responded well to it. The teacher explained his rationale for teaching vocabulary in this manner:

Usually the students look up the dictionary, which is good in itself but they do not understand the word [definition]. However, it is better than nothing. The problem [with the use of a dictionary] is the answer is always perfect. I want them to break the habit of copying down from the dictionary and just having them answer worksheet. I want them to have an understanding of what the word means and be able to use it.

At this mid-semester point he said he was worried whether or not these strategies would be useful or not for his students and if the class was becoming boring because he was trying to teach these new strategies. Up to this mid-semester point he said that he had attempted strategy training in questioning, clarifying (however, he did not give me any examples of how he taught these two strategies and I do not know how much time he spent on this strategy training), and predicting strategies without much success. Nevertheless, he was pleased that the vocabulary aspect of the lesson went well and that the students responded well to the 'new' vocabulary method. He said that he would slow down a little for the remainder of the semester and try to reinforce the strategies already introduced through further activities and exercises.

#### LESSONS FIVE AND SIX

This observation took place towards the end of the second semester. Again, I do not know how much time the teacher had spent on strategy instruction since the mid-term observation. The teacher said he reinforced the strategies whenever he could. According to the teacher the objective of this lesson, which took place towards the end of the semester, was to reinforce how to skim in order to comprehend the main meaning of a passage. The class started with the teacher putting up an OHT on "Steps for reading comprehension". The teacher and students then discussed these steps.

#### Episode 3

**T:** *Step one is skim through for main idea and what passage is about. Do you read everything?*

**Ss:** *No.*

**T:** *Step two is read passage for understanding. What is the next step?*

**Ss:** *Questions.*

**T:** *Yes, step three is look at the questions. What is the next step?*

**Ss:** *Read again.*

**T:** *Yeah, step four is read once more.*

**T:** *The next step is answer questions.*

By this stage of the semester all of the students knew the steps (that the teacher outlined in Episode 3) but not many of them actually used them (or so they told the teacher). However, rather than giving up on strategy instruction, the teacher tried to refine the steps to make them more suitable for his students. The dialogue in Episode 4 shows how he tried to accomplish this.

## Episode 4

T: *How many actually follow this?* [Referring to steps discussed in episode 3 [No student response]

T: *Steps 2 and 4 [Read the passage twice] are not realistic, are they? How many agree?* [Half of the students' hands are raised]

T: *Today we will try something new and change the steps a little...Not reading...skimming through. Then I will ask what kind of passage it is. I will give you some choices.* [Students read silently]

[Four minutes later]

T: *Don't worry about what kinds of words you don't know yet...only what type of passage it is.*

T: *How many bothered about difficult words?*

Ss: [Half the students' hands went up]

T: *Does it affect the way you understand the passage?*

Ss: [All] yes.

T: *Are all the details important?*

Ss: No!

T: *If we have a story we can use chain of events. Let's look at the next paragraph...what are the events? Let's summarize...what do you think?*

S2 (female): *Unconscious...*

S3 (female): *Badly injured.*

T: *Use your own words.*

S4 (male): *Exhausted—no energy.*

T: *What if no energy...then cannot move* [The teacher writes these on the board]

T: *Is it important to read details?*

Ss: [Most shout] No!

T: *Only the main event.*

The exchange between the teacher and the students as outlined in episode 4 suggests that many of the students were beginning to think about their reading process. The students seemed as if they were becoming more comfortable with this different way of analyzing their own reading behaviours. After the exchanges in Episode 4, the teacher asked the students to give the main points of the passage in their own words and he wrote the points on the board. He then compared these answers with his prepared answers. Most answers were very similar.

The second lesson/period (lesson six) started with a review of what students had studied in the previous lesson. The teacher then asked the comprehension questions and all the students answered the questions with little difficulty. This was after only reading the text once [compared to the suggested two times as he outlined in the previous lesson]. One student then said he knew why they were able to understand and answer the questions; this exchange is outlined in Episode 5.

## Episode 5

S6 (male): *I know why we know the answers...you [teacher] went through the chain of events with us, so it was easy.* [He was implying that he would not have been able to do this without the previous lesson by the teacher highlighting certain strategies].

T: *Yes (emphatically), that is what I am doing with you (smiling).*

[The teacher then showed the chain of events of the story (one through thirteen points) on the OHT.] He then asked the students their opinion of this method:

T: *How many think this is a better way than the others I have shown you?*

Ss: [All students put hands up]

T: *How many think this takes more effort?* [Half the students' hands were raised]

T: *Don't have to re-read...all answers in the chain of events. Just look at the OHT. We don't have to look at the passage anymore...What do you realize today?*

Ss: (All): *Easier.*

T: *No, easier because we have the chain of events. Why do we have no problems answering?*

Ss: *We have main points.*

T: *You know the value of this...why not do this on your own.*

Ss: *This is extra work!*

T: *Worthwhile...most difficult questions...all answers in the chain of events. Do you need to look in the passage?*

Ss: No.

T: *If this is a test, do you think you will do well?*

Ss: Yes!

T: *But you still don't know all the words...*

Ss: No.

The students were beginning to show more awareness about their reading process, or knowledge of cognition (Carrell, 1998), one of the two essential elements of effective reading (the other being regulation of cognition). Carrell (1998:8) has argued that:

One reason meta-cognition is important for learners is that if learners are not aware of when comprehension is breaking down and what they can do about it, strategies introduced by the teacher will fail and the learner will not be able to use the strategies strategically.

## DISCUSSION AND IMPLICATIONS

Janzen and Stoller (1998) suggest that in order to incorporate reading instruction that emphasizes strategic behaviour, teachers should explain what the strategies are and why they are important in helping to improve reading comprehension. They also argue that teachers should model the strategies, give feedback and remind students about the benefits of strategy use. Most importantly, Janzen and Stoller



(1998:252) point out that the instructional process itself is long term, as it is estimated that it takes several years for students to develop as strategic readers.

Earlier in this paper it was stated that preservice teachers who want to teach English in the secondary school in Singapore must take a PGDE course that includes an 18-hour (nine classes) methods course. Several studies of this module (e.g. Gupta & Saravanan (1995); Farrell & Saravanan, 1998) have indicated that the student teachers were resistant to change and were not willing to incorporate the new techniques (including teaching reading strategies) that were introduced in the module into their teaching of reading. It turned out that student teachers' prior beliefs about the teaching of reading were so strong and the techniques (including the teaching of reading strategies) that were introduced to the student teachers were so new that they could not relate them to their prior experience as learners (Gupta & Saravanan, 1995). For example, when asked why they valued reading aloud in a reading curriculum, the student teachers stated that they themselves had been trained with reading aloud in their own school days (Gupta & Saravanan, 1995). Clearly there is a need to train these student teachers how to implement strategy training more effectively so that their students may benefit more from such instruction.

Additionally, and in light of the findings of this research, the reading module course in the PGDE programme has been revamped. The course now emphasizes concepts in current reading theory: schema theory, the role of prior knowledge, psycholinguistic theory and reading, meta-cognition and self-monitoring techniques, text structure, techniques to promote the use of effective reading strategies (this is emphasized more than before), vocabulary teaching and, importantly, actual lesson plan writing and critiquing. Additionally, discussions of various methods of evaluating reading comprehension in the Singapore examination system are taking place. Nevertheless, an 18-hour module will always be limited in what it can achieve in equipping teachers of English to teach reading to secondary school students. Perhaps the best solution might be to have follow-up in-service courses that focus in a practical way on how to implement reading strategy instruction to give teachers a fuller understanding and enhanced skills in implementing strategic instruction. It seems likely that other institutions world wide have courses that "introduce" strategic instruction for reading but do not actually train teachers in how to implement the strategy training. If time is available, more practice-based activities (e.g. microteaching) could be built into such courses (pre-service and in-service) to give teachers some experience in implementing reading strategy training. In this way, teachers will not be attempting new methods for the first time when they teach in the school system.

The teacher in this study was trying to implement strategic reading in his English reading class. As the extracts in each of the Episodes demonstrate, the teacher was constantly reminding his students about their own approaches to reading and why

past strategies were not effective. He reviewed what they were going to do before each reading lesson and why. Also, at the end of each reading lesson he summarized the strategies he was teaching and why he did what he did (see episodes 1, 2, 3 and 4). The teacher showed how he answered comprehension questions and he tried to use authentic materials that were relevant to the students' lives (see episodes 2 and 5). Most importantly, he said that he was "in this [strategic instruction] for the long haul". Although frustrated at the beginning of the semester at his students' lack of interest and implementation of the 'new' strategies he was trying to introduce, this teacher, nevertheless, slowly began to realize that it would take time for the 'old habits' to change. Towards the end of the semester he was even beginning to achieve some success with his students' realizations of aspects of their reading process. However, he now realizes that it is not easy to engender effective reading habits into his students. Nevertheless, he said he would continue to give the students effective strategies that will make them successful readers in English.

The results of this study indicate that teachers of L2 reading may need to adjust and adapt strategy instruction not only to meet their students' needs but also to their own beliefs, the local context (including institutional constraints), their teaching styles and their own personalities, whilst not forgetting the learning styles of their students. Additionally, EFL teachers, using what some in Asia might consider "western" approaches to instruction, need to carefully consider ways to adapt these approaches to their students' learning styles. They should not expect immediate success. The teacher in this study realized that, after a process of trial and error, he had to refine how he would approach the teaching of certain reading strategies to his students. The teacher has also realized that strategy instruction for reading comprehension takes time and that one semester is not enough time for him to successfully change the ineffective reading strategies his students have been using for some time. Although he had intended to teach strategies such as prediction, text structure recognition, and activation of prior knowledge, he was only able to get the students to incorporate prediction into their reading process. He also got them to recognize that a story usually has a chain of events and he was successful, to a certain extent, in getting his students to think about their overall reading process. For the following year, he said that he would introduce fewer new strategies for effective reading comprehension, and that he would reinforce these strategies during the year.

Additionally, the teacher said he realized that he would have to help his students to defeat the self-doubt notion that they had developed as a result of previous frustrations while reading English texts. These students had not been able to answer comprehension questions in tests of reading in English and as a result, had built-up negative associations with reading in English: reading equals pain. L2 reading teachers may need to develop empathy with students' feelings during the "reading

struggle" and be able to communicate this to their students. Part of strategy training in reading in a second language (and all the other skills for that matter) should include instruction in these affective strategies.

The ultimate aim of strategy training is for students to benefit from it by improving their reading comprehension. However, studies in training of reading strategies typically show large gains in knowledge of strategies, but only modest gains in actual reading comprehension. Additionally, some researchers contend that the test of whether strategy instruction is effective is evidence that students use the strategies independently of the teacher and are able to improve their reading comprehension on a wide variety of texts. The fact that the teacher in this case study had only managed to get students to follow along in performing strategy use in class with some explicit prompting (see Episodes four and five) does not mean that he has failed. It may be that the strategies the teacher chose for instruction (prediction, text structure recognition, activation of prior knowledge, and some vocabulary learning strategies) affected the uptake. For example, Rusciolelli (1995) found that only two of eleven reading strategies introduced to students, skimming and word guessing, were used successfully.

However, the purpose of this study was not to test the effectiveness issue directly. It was to outline what happens when a teacher attempts to introduce strategy training for the first time in a reading class. The fact that the teacher in this study met with only limited success should not deter other teachers from introducing strategy training to their students. However, teachers, especially those in EFL settings in which passing mandated tests is the norm and where there is limited instructional time, should be aware that it takes some time before students are able to make use of effective reading strategies. Ultimately, it seems that one problem may be that the teacher does not really know how to teach reading strategies and may therefore need further practical training in how to implement strategy training in his classes and, ideally, support during the implementation of the new approach to developing reading skills.

## CONCLUSION

Though generalization from studies such as this is always problematic, there is reason to believe that practitioners may find much of what is discussed here has relevance for their particular contexts and practice. Although the teacher in this study achieved mixed success when he attempted to introduce strategic instruction, there were, nevertheless, many positive outcomes. This teacher is a reflective practitioner whose main concern was his students' learning how to read effectively. The teacher in this study adapted instruction to the needs of his students. He attempted to recycle strategies to ensure that his students became more comfortable with the notion of strategy use. He also made sure that his students realized when

they were using ineffective strategies and how they could choose more appropriate ones. However, the teacher's biggest realization was that it would take a lot more time before his students would be able to use these strategies independently and voluntarily. Nevertheless, even though the students did not readily take to these new strategies, they were beginning to achieve some knowledge of their own reading processes. More effective training in how to implement strategy training in a pre-service course (time permitting) and/or in in-service courses may help to give teachers more support when trying to implement strategy training in their English reading classes.

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