THE EFFICACY OF THE APPROACH TO DESIGN READING MATERIALS

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ABSTRACT: *This article explores four distinct approaches to designing reading materials: psychological, linguistic, content-oriented, and pedagogically-oriented. Each approach offers unique methods for enhancing reading comprehension and proficiency among learners. Through the examination of various published courses and theoretical frameworks, this article aims to provide a comprehensive understanding of how these approaches can be applied to optimize reading development.*

Keywords: *reading comprehension, reading proficiency, teaching methods, educational frameworks, approaches, reading materials design.*

INTRODUCTION

Reading is a complex cognitive process essential for academic success and everyday communication. Designing effective reading materials requires an understanding of the various approaches that can be utilized to enhance reading skills. This article delves into four primary approaches: the psychological approach, which focuses on natural reading processes; the linguistic approach, which emphasizes the text's linguistic features; the content-oriented approach, which is centered on the purpose and meaning of the reading material; and the pedagogically-oriented approach, which prioritizes the learner's autonomy and individual progression. By exploring these approaches, educators can better tailor

their teaching methods to improve reading outcomes for diverse groups of learners.

MAIN PART

The psychological approach to reading development focuses on training the natural reading processes that occur in the mind of the individual reader. According to this approach, reading training operates at two levels: word recognition and interpretation. Morrow's "Skills for Reading" (1980) is an example of a course designed to practice these psychological processes. Morrow outlines three interdependent elements of the reading process: recognition of visual input, structuring input into meaningful stretches, and interpretation of the input. The exercises in this course aim to train these mental processes, emphasizing the importance of understanding the underlying theory and its practical application in the classroom.

The linguistic approach concentrates on the words and sentences of the reading passage, assuming that handling linguistic features efficiently will improve reading ability. Sim and Laufer-Dvorkin's "Reading Comprehension Course" exemplifies this approach by emphasizing syntactic or lexical points likely to cause reading difficulties. This method aligns with the common-sense notion that reading ability in a foreign language depends largely on the reader's language proficiency. While knowledge of the language is crucial, it is not sufficient for good reading, as reading ability in the first language and familiarity with the subject matter also play significant roles.

The content-oriented approach to reading emphasizes the importance of the reader's purpose, which Fames refers to as "a critical component." Fames argues that having a specific purpose makes reading more goal-directed and efficient. Sprache provides evidence that a lack of purpose can lead to "ineffectual and superficial reading," particularly among native speakers. Content-oriented reading exercises often provide readers with a purpose by specifying reasons for reading before they begin, or by selecting passages that align with the learners' specific needs to stimulate their interest and involvement.

Many activities in courses like "Reading for a Purpose" and "Reasons for Reading" are based on content-oriented approaches. These courses use a variety of original texts from diverse sources, requiring learners to extract specific information or perform operations such as following instructions or solving problems, rather than reading the entire text in detail. However, published courses tend to focus excessively on specific purposes. In "Study Skills in English," Wallace emphasizes the importance of purpose in reading. Wallace's exercises not only provide purpose-directed activities but also aim to develop learners' awareness of the significance of purpose. For instance, one exercise asks students to suggest reading materials for various purposes and compare them to other purposes. Not all content-oriented courses explicitly mention purpose. Some select texts based on thematic or topical interest. The "English Studies Series" from the early 1970s, for example, offers reading passages on specific subjects like Chemistry, Engineering, and Agriculture. These books, intended for use with a teacher, are fully annotated and related to the learners' specific fields, fostering interest and purpose.

The pedagogically-oriented approach focuses on learning theories that motivate the design of the entire course. Jolly's "Reading Choices" is a notable example, offering a set of reading cards for self-access work based on the assumption that individual choice and control over reading materials enhance reading success. This approach emphasizes the importance of allowing students to choose their reading materials and progress at their own pace, fostering independence and personal control over the reading activity.

CONCLUSION

Each approach to designing reading materials offers unique benefits and addresses different aspects of the reading process. The psychological approach, which emphasizes natural reading processes; the linguistic approach, which emphasizes text linguistic features; the content-oriented approach, which is focused on the goal and meaning of the reading material; and the pedagogically-oriented approach, which prioritizes the learner's autonomy and individual

progression, are the four main approaches that educators can use to improve reading skills.

The psychological method focuses on word recognition and interpretation in order to train each reader's natural reading processes. The linguistic approach concentrates on the reading passage's words and sentences with the theory that effective manipulation of linguistic elements will enhance reading comprehension. By highlighting the reader's purpose, the content-oriented approach encourages efficient and goal-directed reading. Courses like "Reading for a Purpose" and "Reasons for Reading" use content-oriented exercises to stimulate interest and involvement.

The pedagogically-oriented approach focuses on learning theories that motivate the design of the entire course, allowing students to choose their reading materials and progress at their own pace.

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