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Jigsaw reading in the context of developing integrated skills

In real life the language skills of listening, speaking, reading and writing are generally integrated rather than occurring in isolation. When taking part in a conversation, for example, we both listen and speak; when we fill in a form we read and write, and taking notes from a lecture involves listening and writing. Often the use of one skill leads on naturally from another – we often read a novel or see a film and talk about it later to a friend. Or we may take part in a meeting and write a follow-up report [1: 85].

Therefore, in order to imitate the natural processes of skill-mixing and also because we want to provide maximum learning opportunities for the different students in our classes, it makes sense to integrate different skills [2: 266] in a foreign language lesson.

As much language production work grows out of texts that students see or hear [2: 267] jigsaw reading is an excellent opportunity to develop integrated skills. By means of this technique we use written texts to motivate our students into speaking, listening and writing.

To begin with, Jigsaw is a cooperative learning technique that enables each student of a "home" group to specialize in one aspect of a topic. Students meet with members from other groups who are assigned the same aspect, and after mastering the material, return to the "home" group and teach the material to their group members. With jigsaw, each student in the "home" group serves as a piece of the puzzle and when they work together as a whole, they create the complete jigsaw puzzle.

Jigsaw has the following objectives: 1) to encourage cooperative

learning among students, 2) to develop reading, listening, speaking, particularly summarising skills.

Some steps are recommended to follow:

1. Introduce the technique and the topic to be studied.
2. Assign each student to a "home group" of 3-5 students who reflect a range of reading abilities.
3. Determine a set of reading selections and assign one selection to each student.
4. Create "expert groups" that consist of students across "home groups" who will read the same selection.
5. Give all students a framework for managing their time on the various parts of the jigsaw task.
6. Provide key questions to help the "expert groups" gather information in their particular area.
7. Provide materials and resources necessary for all students to learn about their topics and become "experts."
8. Discuss the rules for reconvening into "home groups" and provide guidelines as each "expert" reports the information learned.
9. Prepare a summary chart or graphic organizer for each "home group" as a guide for organizing the experts' information report.
10. Remind students that "home group" members are responsible to learn all content from one another.

In addition, it is important that the reading material assigned is at appropriate instructional levels. Advanced planning and careful organization to make this technique really effective are essential [3].

Here is an example of using Jigsaw reading in EFL Methodology Course.

Read your part (A-C) of the article “The role of grammar teaching” [4] and define the main features of the *shallow-end approach* and the *deep-end approach to CLT*, discuss them in “expert groups”, fill in the table. Share your findings in your “home groups”, complete the table to summarize the article.

Approach to CLT	Features
Shallow-end approach	<i>to learn the grammatical rules and then apply them in a communicative situation</i> ...
Deep-end approach	<i>grammar should be acquired unconsciously</i> ...

A. The shallow-end approach to Communicative Language Teaching is based on the thought that in order to make the learner use language in a communicative situation it is necessary first to learn the grammatical rules and then apply them in that communicative situation; on the other hand, the deep-end approach to CLT is based on the belief that grammar is acquired unconsciously during the performance on those communicative situations, so it would be useless to teach grammar previously and explicitly (Thornbury, 1999). According to this, CLT does deal with grammar, at least in its shallow-end approach.

B. However, the fact that there is grammar teaching in the shallow-end approach does not mean that this version of Communicative Language Teaching is not communicative. Grammar is considered as a means towards communication. In shallow-end syllabuses grammar is taught, but it is the way in which it is taught and its final result into the learners' communicative performance the two factors that make that grammar meaningful and communicative. In the shallow-end to CLT, grammar is taught in a way that we can define as *inductive*: learners are not presented with a list of grammatical rules that they have to learn by heart (presentation-practice-production cycle) but rather, the teacher provides them with examples from which the learners will have to infer the rules by themselves. Rutherford (1996) calls this inductive way of teaching *consciousness-raising*. By means of this consciousness-raising, the teacher makes the learners relate the new grammatical concepts to other grammatical information that they already have, so the new grammar is as familiar to the learner as possible and it is not presented as something strange or unattached to previous knowledge.

C. Contrarily from the shallow-end approach, the deep-end methodology claimed that grammar should be acquired unconsciously, in line with Krashen's theories (1985) reflected on his Natural Approach, which became widely popular as an acquisition-oriented model. The cycle of input-intake-output reflected in this theory assumed no role for grammar, as it would affect the final aim of communication. As conscious reflection about grammar affects negatively input processing and performance. According to Lock, this excluding view of grammar in deep-end approaches was also strongly influenced by a rejection of traditional methodologies in which grammatical competence was acquired with the approach of the rule plus drilling methodology typical of Audiolingual or traditional grammar methods (Lock, 1997), because learning outcomes were not satisfactory: learners knew a lot about grammar but were unable to put that grammatical knowledge into practice. The reaction, in deep-end approaches, was not to teach grammar, as learners would be unable to integrate it within communication processes.

Taking all the above into account, we can draw the conclusion that, a jigsaw reading task is based on the idea of skill integration, since it is impossible to complete it successfully in one skill area (reading) without involving some other skills (speaking, listening, writing).

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