

USING EXTENSIVE READING MATERIAL IN TEACHING STORY READING COMPREHENSION FOR 8TH GRADE STUDENTS IN VIETNAM

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ABSTRACT

Vietnamese education is completing a roadmap to change curricula and textbooks, so teachers and students are facing many difficulties and confusion. One of those difficulties is how to use extensive material in teaching reading comprehension to promote students' abilities and meet the requirements of innovative testing and assessment. This article presents research results on concepts and criteria for using extensive material and proposes a process for using extensive material through teaching reading comprehension of story texts with single-line plots for 8th grade students in Vietnam.

Keywords: Extensive Material, Reading Comprehension, Competencies, Story, Use.

1. INTRODUCTION

According to Circular 32 dated December 26, 2018 of the Ministry of Education and Training of Vietnam, the 2018 general education program in Philology is built on the communication skills axis: reading, writing, speaking and listening. "Reading" is an important skill, forming the main axis of the program. In the three sets of Vietnamese Philology 8 textbooks, "reading" skills are trained through texts in Reading Comprehension and Reading Practice sections. However, the assessment orientation of the Ministry of Education and Training of Vietnam is aimed at promoting students' abilities through materials outside of textbooks. Therefore, teachers must strengthen the construction and use of extensive material for students during the teaching process.

However, implementing new programs and textbooks in general, teaching reading comprehension and using extensive material in particular is still very new to teachers and students. Information sources and reference materials serving the teaching and learning process are limited. Many teachers today are not aware of the importance of using extensive material, have not built the habit and ability to proactively build and use new extensive material in their individual teaching activities...

There have been many works and research articles related to the use of extensive material in teaching Philology (works by Pham Thi Thu Hien, Dao Phuong Hue, Nguyen Van Tung, Nguyen Hong Ngoc...) but there are no studies that have proposed the process of building and using extensive material in teaching reading comprehension of story texts for 8th grade students. This article addresses the use of extensive material in teaching reading comprehension of story texts with single-line plots for 8th grade students in Vietnam.

2. RESEARCH METHODS

In this research, we used statistical methods to collect and survey story texts in grade 8 Philology textbooks; comparative method to compare equivalent corpora in terms of topic and genre; method of analyzing works according to genre characteristics to identify and select

extensive material and design a set of questions to promote reading comprehension ability for students.

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

3.1. Concept and criteria for selecting extensive material

3.1.1. Concept

Extensive Reading (referred to as ER) is a reading method that allows students to read materials within their language ability to practice reading skills. Extensive material is a text system outside of textbooks, which is equivalent in topic and genre to the texts taught in textbooks, in order to develop students' reading comprehension ability. From there, it helps students apply their existing knowledge and skills to access and explore new texts related to the lesson.

Extensive reading materials help students update new issues in life, discover new meanings of texts, know how to read and understand texts of the same genre, form the necessary qualities and abilities, and meet the program requirements. Teachers can use extensive material in teaching and designing exams with diverse and new questions, promoting students' problem-solving and creative abilities.

3.1.2. Criteria for selecting extensive material

- Extensive reading material must meet the requirements of the program and lessons.
- Extensive reading material must have the same genre and topic as the learned text.
- Extensive reading material must be suitable for students' psychological characteristics.
- Extensive reading material must ensure content value and artistic value.

By selecting materials according to the above set of criteria, teachers can create more creative and richer extensive material, helping students develop reading comprehension and practice critical thinking.

3.2. Proposing a process for using extensive material in teaching story reading comprehension for 8th grade students

Step 1: Determine the genre and requirements to be met through the material

Step 2: Select material that is equivalent in genre, topic and meets the requirements

Step 3: Design questions and reading comprehension exercises according to ability level: recognition - understanding - low application - high application.

Step 4: Suggest answers

Levels and signs of recognition:

Level of recognition: recalling and reproducing knowledge (defining, describing, recognizing, marking, listing, naming, stating...).

Level of understanding: understanding and explaining (distinguishing, explaining, expanding, generalizing, giving examples, predicting, summarizing...).

Level of low application: applying knowledge to new situations or solving exercises (identifying, discovering, proving, solving...).

Level of high application: linking components together to form a new whole, evaluating (designing, explaining, rewriting, recounting, evaluating, comparing ...).

3.3. Example of using extensive material in teaching reading comprehension of stories with single-line plots for 8th grade students

Step 1: Determine the genre and requirements to be met through the extensive material

A single-line plot is a type of plot with only one event line, so the event system is often relatively simple, focusing on showing the personality development process of one or a few main characters.

Requirements:

- Recognize the overall content, typical details, themes, stories, and characters in the work as a whole.
- Recognize and analyze the theme and message that the story wants to convey to the reader.
- Recognize and analyze the author's main feelings, emotions, and inspirations expressed through the work.
- Describe changes in readers' thoughts, feelings or way of life after reading literary works.
- Recognize and analyze single-line plots.

Step 2: Select material that is equivalent in genre, topic and meets the requirements

With the theme "Portrait of Life" and the story genre with a single-line plot, the research team proposed to use an excerpt from the short story *Like Tree Sprouts* by author Ta Thi Thanh Hai as an extensive material.

Step 3: Design questions and reading comprehension exercises

Question 1: In which person is the story told? How effective is this narrator in expressing the story's content?

Sentence 2: Summarize the main events in the excerpt. Who is the main character in the story? In what space and time does the story take place?

Full name: _____
Class: _____

Like tree sprouts

Summary of main events

Main characters

Space

Time

Question 3: Why didn't Ms. Thanh tell Thu about the appearance of the "special building" behind the department? Did Ms. Thanh achieve her goal?

Question 4: What was Thu's attitude when she heard and learned about that "special house"? What personality does that expression represent in the character Thu?

Question 5: Evaluate the two images appearing at the beginning and end of the work. What do those two images remind you of?

Step 4: Suggested answers

Question 1:

- The story is told in the 3rd person (hidden)
- The narrator can tell the story flexibly, freely, and have an objective view of the events and characters in the story.

Question 2:

- Summary of main events: Thu is a warm-hearted girl. She graduated from Medical University while Thu's father wanted her to major in accounting. Thu graduated in a sad and unstable mood, not only because of conflicts with her father but also because Thu's lover passed away in an accident. Thu decided to apply for an internship at Ms. Thanh's hospital. After the last bus trip of the day, the hospital appeared before Thu's eyes with a mournful look in a desolate space. Ms. Thanh led Thu to the "special building" behind the department, which was renovated into a miniature social protection center. Here, Thu met eighteen children and learned about their special lives. Ms. Thanh asked Thu to help take care of the children outside of work hours at the hospital. Thu didn't answer, but she felt all the self-pity, anger, and uncertainty disappear. She found a place to put her faith.

- The main character in the story is Thu

- Space: In a mountain town hospital, nestled in the middle of green mountains

- Time: Weekend

Question 3:

Ms. Thanh did not tell Thu about the special house because she wanted Thu's feelings to come naturally. Ms. Thanh has achieved her goal.

Question 4:

Thu didn't say anything but just gently looked at the children. When receiving Ms. Thanh's apology and information about the house and the special children, she did not have any attitude of blame or judgment. This shows that Thu is a warm, kind and delicate girl. Although she did not directly answer, in her heart Thu also implicitly agreed with Ms. Thanh's suggestion, ready to take care of the children - the seedlings rising in life.

Question 5:

- These are two opposing images. On one side is the scene of the old, cold, dreary hospital gate, and on the other side is the scene of the miniature shelter, peaceful, warm, and full of love.

- The two images can be understood as the harshness of life with the human heart. Even though life is dark and cold, the people there are still strong and kind. That is also proof of the change in Thu's heart, from being uncertain and sad to becoming happy, warm and finding life more meaningful.

4. CONCLUSION

Extensive material in reading comprehension is not only a teaching support tool but also an opportunity for students to discover more about the world of Philology and develop their own

abilities. The rich and diverse set of expanded reading comprehension materials will help students access many new texts, receive new aesthetic values and profound humanistic values from the texts. Therefore, building a guaranteed and appropriate language system is the way teachers create a diverse and interesting learning environment for students.

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