
DEVELOPING THE COMPETENCE OF READING COMPREHENSION OF SCIENCE FICTION STORY FOR 7TH GRADE STUDENTS IN VIETNAM

To Minh Hieu, Vi Thi Thu Hien, Nguyen Thanh Hien
University of Education, Thai Nguyen University, Vietnam

<https://doi.org/10.54922/IJEHSS.2024.0719>

ABSTRACT

The 2018 general education program in Vietnam has been implemented with the concretization of three sets of textbooks: The Kite, Connecting Knowledge to Life, and Creative Horizon. In the 7th grade Philology textbook, in addition to familiar literary genres, science fiction is a new genre included in the curriculum. This is a new genre that has created excitement for both teachers and students. However, this genre also causes many difficulties for teachers in developing lesson plans and organizing the teaching of science fiction stories. The 7th grade textbook has only been deployed for two years in Vietnam, so there are not many reference materials, leading to teachers being confused in teaching and developing competence, especially the ability to read and understand science fiction stories for students. Therefore, in this article, we propose some measures to develop the competence to read science fiction stories for 7th grade students in Vietnam.

Keywords: Competency, Reading Comprehension, 7th Grade Students, Science Fiction Stories.

1. INTRODUCTION

In Vietnam, Philology is one of the important subjects in the process of orienting, forming and developing the personality of learners, whether in the 2006 program or the 2018 program. However, the 2006 Literature program only stops at forming qualities and skills through equipping knowledge without clearly defining the general and specific competencies that students need to achieve. The 2018 Philology program has innovated and overcome the limitations of the 2006 program, focusing on goals and solutions to help students gradually develop comprehensive qualities and abilities; combine the development of general and specific competencies; combine capacity development and quality development. The 2018 Philology Program is designed along four main axes: Reading, Writing, Speaking and Listening, creating a comprehensive education system. Among the specific abilities that need to be developed, the competence of “reading comprehension” is placed in an important position, making a great contribution to the comprehensive development of students.

Literary texts are the type of text that is focused on in the 2018 Philology program in Vietnam with many rich and diverse genres. Among them, science fiction is a new type of text introduced into teaching, creating excitement for teachers and students, but there are still difficulties in the teaching process. How to help students have the ability to read and understand science fiction texts inside and outside of textbooks is a concern of many teachers when teaching this type of text.

2. RESEARCH METHODS

To carry out this research, we used the document retrospective method to study documents related to science fiction stories, science fiction reading comprehension ability and 2018 general education program in Philology in Vietnam. On that basis, we conducted an analysis to propose teaching measures to develop the ability to read science fiction stories for 7th grade students in Vietnam.

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

3.1. Some details about science fiction stories

Science fiction is a genre of fictional stories about things that happen in the world and is based on the writer's imagination about scientific knowledge. Science fiction stories use logical writing to develop ideas about future technology. With a foundation of scientific theories, there are hypotheses in science fiction stories that can become true. Science fiction stories began to appear in the second half of the 19th century in France and gradually spread throughout the world. Famous names who wrote science fiction stories are Jules Verne, Alexander Romanovich Belyaev, Ray Bradbury, Farmer, Stevenson, Wolfe, Le Guin, Loi Lowry, H.G Wells, Douglas Adams... Some famous science fiction stories include Journey to the Center of the Earth (Jules Verne, 1864); Twenty Thousand Leagues Under the Sea (Jules Verne, 1807); The Time Machine (H.G Wells, 1895); 451 degrees Fahrenheit (Ray Bradbury)...

Story topics: Science fiction story topics are often rich and diverse, they can be space travel (exploration, searching for planets with life like Earth), space travel (to the future or the past or through time to the fourth dimension), predicting new scientific achievements.

Plot: The plot is often thrilling and thrilling, built around fictional events related to scientific achievements.

Story situations: Science fiction story situations often contain special situations, difficult situations and conflicts that need to be resolved.

Events in the story: Events in science fiction stories often mix events that take place in the real world with events that happen in a fictional world.

Characters in stories: Characters in science fiction stories can be ordinary people, scientists, inventors but possess special scientific and technological equipment thanks to which they can do extraordinary things or could be alien monsters with strange abilities.

Space and time in the story: Space can be under the ocean, outer space, space on a galactic planet or a completely conventional fourth space. The hypothetical time is far from the birth date of the future or past work... and can also occur almost identically to the birth date of the work.

3.2. The competence of reading comprehension of science fiction story

Science fiction reading comprehension is the reader's ability to understand and interact with the complex, scientific, and imaginative elements in science fiction works. This includes the ability to understand scientific concepts, predict events in the story, and infer, evaluate, and draw conclusions about the consequences of various plot elements.

Science fiction reading comprehension includes the reader's ability to understand and analyze complex elements in science fiction works. This includes:

Understanding of scientific concepts: Readers need basic knowledge of scientific concepts such as physics, chemistry, biology, and technology to be able to understand and evaluate the ideas and technologies presented in the story.

Ability to reason and predict: Readers need to be able to reason in order to predict further developments in the story and understand the consequences of the character's decisions.

Imaginative thinking: Reading science fiction requires readers to have a broad imagination to create and visualize the worlds, technologies, and situations that the author creates.

Analyzing and evaluating: Readers need to be able to analyze and evaluate factors such as logic, reliability of scientific information, and the ability to connect events in the story.

3.3. Requirements for reading comprehension of science fiction stories for 7th grade students in Literature textbooks in Vietnam

Book	Requirements
<i>Connecting Knowledge to Life, and</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Recognize some elements of science fiction stories: themes, events, situations, plot, characters, space, time; summarize the text briefly. - Know aspirations and dreams; have the will to turn good aspirations and dreams into reality.
<i>The Kite</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Recognize some formal elements (events, situations, plot, characters, context,...); content (theme, topic and meaning) of science fiction stories. - Appreciate scientific ideas; be brave, love nature, love to explore, love to imagine and create;...
<i>Creative Horizon</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Recognize some elements of science fiction stories such as themes, events, situations, plot, characters, space, time; summarize the text briefly. - Recognize the character's personality expressed through gestures, actions, dialogue, thoughts of other characters in the story, the storyteller's words; recognize and state the effects of changing the type of narrator (first person and third person narrator). - Be kind and respect for differences.

3.4. Some measures to develop the competence of reading comprehension of science fiction stories for 7th grade students in Vietnam

3.4.1. Flexibly applying a number of reading comprehension teaching methods to develop students' competence to read science fiction stories

a) Method of teaching reading symbols

Teachers organize students to perceive material symbols and recognize their meanings. Students are exposed to letters, images, tables, etc. to convert that system of symbols into sounds, images and knowledge in their brains. Sentences are combined with sounds, images are linked with semantics. For the science fiction genre, teachers need to organize for students to observe and recognize key words and illustrations so that students can apply creativity and logical thinking to discover and explain the concepts. difficult words, understanding the overall meaning of the text. When using this method, students need to be guided by teachers in using the techniques and should be given conditions for them to practice applying those techniques to reading. Students need to have the skills to read and recognize text, graphs, tables, etc. for the method to be optimally effective. Students must use their inherent knowledge and understanding to understand the meaning of those symbols. Students need to be equipped with background knowledge to interpret, receive and learn new information. For the science fiction genre, teachers need to organize students to observe and identify keywords and illustrations.

b) Text decoding method

Teachers organize students to receive, analyze, and explain the meaning of the text and discover hidden meanings. Thanks to that, students will have a deeper understanding of the problem they are studying. When using this method, students are required to read the text first at home and record their evaluation and explanation of their work. Students need to understand the information content of the text correctly and accurately. Teachers guide students on how to prepare for interactive activities (Writing, drawing, charting, mind mapping, singing, doing projects) to prepare for exchanges with teachers and peers, and instruct carefully. interactive skills as well as social skills that children need to use in the interactive discussion process. Teachers need to pay attention to creating a favorable environment and conditions for students to be able to discuss with teachers and other students about what they have read, and organize open discussions in small groups and between groups. It is necessary to combine teaching writing, listening, and speaking in the teaching process.

c) Teaching method to create meaning for text

The teacher and students create situations, or the teacher suggests students connect what they know with information and events in the text, thereby helping students recognize the meaning of the text and create new meaning for the text. When using this method, teachers need to use Philology as a special resource, helping students develop their personal abilities, develop their ability to perceive, be self-aware, and better understand the world around them. Teachers need to provide opportunities and guidance for students to read based on their background knowledge such as life experience, learning experience, knowledge of text organization, language, culture, etc. Teachers need to help students activate background knowledge by guiding them to set reading goals, ask questions, predict, make connections... Teachers combine teaching writing, listening, and speaking in the process of teaching reading.

In addition, teachers combine some active teaching methods such as:

Group discussion: Students work in groups to discuss details in the story, share opinions and solve related questions. For example, in a lesson about the story "The Time Machine" by H.G. Wells, teachers can divide students into small groups, each group will discuss a different aspect of the story, such as the development of technology and its impact on society. Then, each group will present the results of their discussion to the class.

Role-playing: Students take on the role of characters in the story to gain a deeper understanding of their psychology and actions. For example, when studying the story "Fahrenheit 451" by Ray Bradbury, students can role-play characters such as Montag, Clarisse, or Beatty to better understand their inner conflicts and actions. Students will perform a short play based on a passage from the story and discuss the meaning of the character's actions and words.

3.4.2. Using a system of questions to read and understand science fiction stories in the direction of developing competence

In building teaching activities, especially when discussing science fiction works, teachers need to build a flexible system of questions to help students develop their abilities. This question system plays an important role in determining the success of a lesson and the teacher's progress. By adjusting the question system, teachers can shape the way students approach and grasp information, from remembering, understanding, to applying, analyzing, synthesizing and evaluating, according to the 6-level model in Bloom's cognitive scale (1951). However, question design needs to be flexible and appropriate to students' specific abilities, which depends on the specific circumstances of each classroom.

The reading comprehension process includes 3 stages: before reading, while reading, and after reading. At each stage, readers perform different activities. Using flexible and appropriate questions will help students go deeper into the content and develop comprehensive reading comprehension skills.

Before reading: Mobilize understanding of genre, author, and work; Based on the title and topic of the work to predict the content of the text; Skim read to get a general feel for the content of the text;

While reading: Explain, explain, classify, compare, connect... information (according to the characteristics of the text).

After reading: Evaluate the form and content of the text; Apply knowledge of previously read texts to reading new texts; Solve a variety of academic and life tasks using knowledge of the text students have read.

3.4.3. Using a system of exercises to develop the ability to read and understand science fiction stories

The system of exercises for reading comprehension of science fiction stories in the direction of developing students' competence includes different types of exercises: multiple choice, essays with many specific subtypes, including exercises in class and at home. From there, teachers and students can choose types of exercises to practice and develop language use skills at different levels appropriate to students' abilities. Using a system of reading comprehension exercises designed in the direction of student development is not only a way to actively enhance teaching hours and innovate teaching methods, but also to increase attraction and maximize the central role of learners, training skills and competence to use Vietnamese in real daily communication contexts.

3.4.4. Strengthen the organization of experiential activities to develop the competence to read and understand science fiction stories

Organizing experiential activities is also a way for learners to develop their own abilities when participating. Not only that, organizing activities also helps students feel more interested in the subject. Therefore, in the process of teaching science fiction stories, teachers need to increase the organization of experiential activities for students and choose activities that suit the actual conditions and abilities of students, thereby helping students become more interested in the science fiction genre, while also helping students increase their creativity, thinking, and deeper access to the content and meaning of this genre of stories.

Step 1: Determine the name of the experiential activity, its goals, and the form of the experiential activity

Step 2: Transfer and assign tasks

For teachers: Assign tasks to groups or individuals to prepare for issues related to experiential activities; Estimate preparatory work, time, location, content of activities...

For students: Discuss and assign tasks to each member of the groups; practice and prepare experiential activities using the agreed format.

Step 3: Groups organize experiential activities

Step 4: Evaluate and comment after completing the activity and form lessons through experiential activities

4. CONCLUSION

Reading comprehension is not only a necessary ability in studying Philology but also an important foundation in students' learning and personal development process. Through reading comprehension, students not only access new knowledge but also develop the ability to reason, analyze and evaluate. This helps them build logical and critical thinking, which is the foundation for success in study and life. To have good reading comprehension ability in science fiction stories, teachers need to flexibly apply the measures proposed above.

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