EXPLORING PEDAGOGICAL REASONING: READING STRATEGY INSTRUCTION FROM TWO TEACHERS' PERSPECTIVES

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Abstract

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This study compares reading lessons given by two teachers in senior middle school classrooms on China's mainland. Classroom observation focused on lesson stages and activities as well as student responses. Follow-up interviews with the teachers aimed to discover the decision-making processes and choices made when teaching the lessons. Most notable were differences in decision-making and pedagogic reasoning when comparing a more experienced teacher to a less-experienced one. It appeared that the less-experienced teacher was nevertheless more aware of integrating theory into actual practice while taking a more learner-centered approach. The more-experienced teacher was more concerned with testing outcomes and appeared to be much more comfortable with a teacher-directed approach. It is hoped that the insights given in this study can lead to increased awareness of how strategies can be effectively taught and how teachers base classroom practices on their own learning experiences and the contexts within which they work.

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Introduction

Reading is considered one of the most important skills which language learners should obtain, particularly as it helps to build vocabulary and leads to lifelong learning and improvement in first and second language skills. "The ability to read is acknowledged to be the most stable and durable of the second language modalities." (Bernhardt, 1991 cited in Zhang & Guo, 2005, p.111). Carrell states (1989) "For many students, reading is by far the most important of the four skills in a second language, particularly in English as a second or foreign language."(p. 1). In China, students have historically studied English mainly through reading since English is learned as a foreign language in classroom settings. In most cases, their teachers are also users of English as an additional language, with all sharing Chinese as a first language.

Until fairly recently in China, a grammar-translation approach to language learning was fairly widespread. For example, in a recent study of 312 English majors studying at three major universities located in Beijing, Shanghai and Guangzhou, Chen and Wilhelm (2007) found that (93%) of the students reported grammar-translation (GT) as being commonly used prior to university, and two-thirds reported GT being frequently used in their university English courses, as well. Teachers accustomed to a grammar-translation approach tend to focus on teaching language points such as grammar and vocabulary, teaching reading skills using a bottom-up approach. Students are expected to focus on the smallest units, decoding words and sentences rather than reading for the "gist" or in a reader-response mode. When the students had difficulties or poor reading comprehension, teachers tended to consider it a problem of the students' limited vocabulary and poor grammar. As a result, students were misled into believing that the only approach to effective reading is to enlarge their vocabulary and to understand and master complex grammar.

However, in 2003, the Chinese government introduced into high schools a new standard curriculum which required that teachers: i) develop the students' ability to use language appropriately, ii) encourage students to learn independently, and iii) integrate language teaching with non-linguistic teaching. Examples of non-linguistic teaching include affective teaching,

strategy teaching and inter-cultural awareness (Chen, Wang & Cheng, 2003). Approaches within the classroom began to shift from the predominately grammar-translation method to more communicative approaches which encourage interaction. In reading lessons, more was done to link reading comprehension and background knowledge, to use text-centered approaches while fostering both interpretive and productive skills, and to provide learning strategies training. Although lacking experience with these newer approaches as language learners themselves, teachers were expected to change their approaches and to teach reading from both a top-down and bottom-up framework with skill and strategy training integrated within their lessons.

Research in second language reading instruction in the last decades of the 1990's tended to focus on general explanations and descriptions of reading strategies employed by competent readers. Think-aloud protocols, for example, examined effective reading interpretation and use of strategies from a learner perspective. Less attention was given to the actual implementation of reading strategy instruction from a teaching perspective. There is a need, therefore, to examine how micro reading skills are presented within the language learning classroom and how (or if) explicit instruction and practice is given.

This study compares strategies and instruction given by two teachers in their senior middle school classrooms on China's mainland. The research is motivated by the following four questions:

1) How are reading strategies taught in actual reading classrooms?
2) Which techniques employed by teachers seem to be more and less effective?
3) Does there seem to be a tendency for teachers with more versus less teaching experience to employ different strategies?
4) In what ways do teacher perceptions of their roles and responsibilities and their beliefs about learning affect decisions made when planning and carrying out instruction?

Although a small-scale study, results may have useful implications when planning reading strategy instruction and when training teachers. As researchers engaged in the in-service and pre-service training of EFL teachers, we were interested in how concepts and information provided in teacher development programs appear to influence the actual thinking and instructional practices of teachers. As such, the literature review which follows covers three main aspects relevant to the training provided to these in-service teachers. The first section of the literature review provides an overview to how reading is now viewed as a complex cognitive and language processing skill requiring "deep" and "surface" approaches to learning. Effective readers appear to employ: i) bottom-up processes, ii) top-down processes, iii) use of schema, and iv) reader-text interaction. The second section of the literature review discusses the teaching of reading, in particular the teaching of explicit reading strategies to ESL/EFL learners. The need to help learners become aware of their strategy use and the importance of a discourse approach to reading are also mentioned within the framework of current trends in the teaching of reading. The final section of the literature review shifts to a review of pedagogic reasoning and the interest in the research literature on the types of decisions made by teachers as they prepare for and implement instruction.

Literature Review -- The Reading Process

For a long time, many Chinese teachers have considered reading as simply a decoding process. When decoding is successful, reading comprehension is realized. Within this "bottom-up" framework, if readers are not successful in English reading comprehension, it is likely to be because they lack phonemic, lexical or syntactic knowledge required for decoding. Knowledge *about* the language is thought to have a greater influence than the reader's own knowledge. By recognizing the smallest units of the language, then building up to word, sentence, and paragraph level, readers reconstruct the author's meaning. In fact, there are studies indicating that word-recognition and decoding skills are transferred from the first to the second language (e.g. Koda 1988, 1989). Some researchers suggest that cognitive skills transferred from first to second language reading are influenced by the orthographic structure of the reader's first language (e.g. Koda, 1998, 2000; Akamatsu, 2003; Hee & Zhao, 2007).

In their study of Chinese (as compared to Korean) readers of English as a second language,

Hee and Zhao (2007) found that the Chinese participants preferred using strategies such as noting context clues, discussion with colleagues, and asking for help from peers or teachers as strategies to aid comprehension of academic texts. They advocate that teachers working with Chinese readers of English "explicitly teach the processing skills that English readers are trained to use" (p. 40). They suggest that teachers with knowledge of Chinese and a foundation in linguistics will have an advantage in that they can help students to identify how meaning in English is mapped into letters (morphemes) whereas meaning in Chinese is mapped into characters. Teachers should provide students with examples of common morphemes in English and practice recognizing them in words and texts. Readers unaccustomed to alphabetic languages can therefore be given the help they need to better employ phonological processing skills helpful at the word-recognition level of comprehension. Teachers play an important role in providing strategy instruction and in bridging the gap between first and second language processing. Effective strategy and reading instruction can assist in the transfer of cognitive and comprehension skills while also helping the reader to develop new skills.

With the advent of schema theory, more attention has been paid to the importance of learner background knowledge and the importance of "top-down" approaches. "The better the reader is able to make correct predictions, the less confirming via the text is necessary." (Carrell, 1989, p. 74). The reader certainly must employ bottom-up processes, drawing upon knowledge and skills with graphophonemic, syntactic, and semantic system of the language. However, according to schema theorists, readers do not focus on these cues but rather use them to predict meaning and to confirm their predictions. Predictions are confirmed by readers through relating what they are reading to past experiences and knowledge of the language. An important aspect of top-down and bottom-up text processing is that both should occur at all levels simultaneously; both should function interactively. As reported by Hee and Zhao (2007), a number of recent studies suggest that such a binary distinction is "overly simplistic" (p. 31). Saricoban (2002) found that good readers use a combination of bottom-up and top-down strategies. He suggests that, when providing reading instruction and guidance, teachers should begin with techniques to help students acquire a global understanding of the target text. Teachers should then move to instruction and scaffolding which helps students to understand the text at paragraph and sentence levels. Figuring out the meanings of larger units helps readers to decode the smaller units by drawing upon context. At the same time, bottom-up strategies such as word recognition skills are important. Different reading processes may be emphasized, especially if working with readers who are at varying proficiency levels.

Reading strategy instruction can help learners to be aware of their effective (and ineffective) use of strategies and can build reading skills. Brown (2001) states that, "For most second language learners who are already literate in a previous language, reading comprehension is primarily a matter of developing appropriate, efficient comprehension strategies" (p. 291). He suggests that both top-down and bottom-up strategies may need to be emphasized depending on individual needs and proficiency levels. For beginning level learners, attention to teaching bottom-up (decoding) reading processes may be needed, especially if the first language is orthographically very different from the target language. At intermediate or advanced levels of proficiency, teachers may help students develop top-down strategies such as understanding discourse markers or paying attention to inferred or implied meanings in a text. Regardless of proficiency level, it is considered important for teachers to help student draw upon background knowledge to make predictions and guesses. Likewise, regardless of proficiency level, students can be helped to develop cohesive and synthesis techniques such as semantic mapping or concept clustering to see how ideas and concepts in the text relate to each other. These strategies can be introduced and practiced at various phases of instruction. For example, a semantic mapping approach and prediction confirmation theory were used by Yu (2005, p. 64-65) in the pre-reading stage of instruction so as to promote reading comprehension, but these strategies were also useful during and after reading.

Efficient reading thus requires sophisticated bottom-up and top-down reading skills, with readers drawing upon various strategies depending on their reading purposes and the type of text with which they are interacting. Effective reading also demands that readers make choices about

the learning approach used. Noor (2006) expresses concern that a focus by teachers on a surface approach during high school years often leads to problems for learners when they enter university, where academic reading is more likely to be linked to cognitive tasks demanding both surface and deep approaches (2006, p. 66). Despite the need for both approaches and instruction in their use, Chalmers and Fuller found that the surface approach continues to dominate (1996) with learners concentrating on correctly answering comprehension questions often written at a literal (versus interpretive or applied) level. Readers are thus trained, from very early on, to simply note key words in a comprehension question and match them to words they can locate in the text.

As advocated by Vacca and Vacca (2005) and others, reading instruction should help students realize that reading is actually an interaction between reader and writer. The reader draws upon background knowledge (schema) and language skills to process the ideas of others. This involves complex cognitive processing operations, especially when operating in a second language. In academic contexts, the learner must know how and when to integrate the various language skills so as to learn and remember information (for study purposes). Nunan (1999, p. 24) points out that "integrative language skills are called forth in reading, for besides decoding the written symbols, readers also need to think (predicting, reasoning, confirming, etc.), write (marking between the lines or taking notes), speak and listen (questioning and discussing).

Since the 1980s, more reading texts have become available to help learners acquire effective reading strategies and more attention has been given to training teachers in reading strategy instruction. Some texts focus on instruction and practice of specific skills and strategies while others focus on learner awareness of their use of various skills. In her text entitled "A Short Course in Teaching Reading Skills," for example, Mikulechy (1990) lists specific reading skills and strategies to be taught. These are similar to those discussed by Brown and include automatic decoding, specifying purpose, identifying genre, questioning, scanning, skimming, recognizing topics, locating topic sentences, and stating the main idea. Besides explicitly teaching strategies, Qian (2005) discusses the need to develop learners' metacognitive awareness of how and when they use strategies. Such awareness can help to foster learner autonomy and prepare students for self-access learning. He suggests that, as part of classroom instruction, the teacher introduce the terminology for each strategy and clearly explain how it can aid reading comprehension. Within this framework, students are then asked to reflect on their reading processes, working with checklists to identify strategies used at the three stages of before, during and after reading. Another way to help students become aware of what they have learned is to ask them to generate post-reading questions (Gardner and Miller, 1999). Xu (2004) similarly draws upon the multi-phase approach to reading instruction, adding a "follow-up" stage to the pre-reading, while reading, and post-reading stages.

More efforts are being made to explicitly teach reading strategies at the university level (e.g. Yu, 2001). When working with experienced, sophisticated readers, some teachers have applied the study of discourse to the reading classroom. (see McCarthy, M., & Carter, R., 2004; Zhang & Wang, 2001 and Liu, 2001) The notions of cohesion and coherence can be taught and utilized when working with texts, for example. Zhang (2003) discusses how an understanding of the standard features of a text (e.g. intentionality, acceptability, informality, situationality and intertextuality) can aid efficient reading and assist in comprehension.

Current practices encourage teachers to be aware of reading theory, to be knowledgeable regarding reading processes, and to be adept at teaching specific strategies and skills that can help students to become more proficient readers. When actually implementing reading instruction, teachers typically have a lesson plan in mind but also need to assess the effectiveness of instruction. Thus the teacher is constantly making decisions and adjusting the learning situation. Elements such as lesson pacing, need for practice, individual strengths/needs, how and when to give feedback, benefits of inductive and deductive approaches, and other considerations combine with the teacher's knowledge and beliefs about learning and about how best to proceed as a reading teacher. Teacher trainers have been particularly interested in examining teachers' pedagogical reasoning processes, which is the focus of the next section.

Pedagogical Reasoning Skills in EFL Teacher Development

Beliefs influence practices. According to Nespor (1987) "Beliefs are far more influential than knowledge in determining how individuals organize and define tasks and problems and are stronger predictors of behavior." (p. 19). Richardson, Anders, Tidwell, and Lloyd (1991) found that change in beliefs preceded change in practices. Guskey studied teachers participating in teacher development programs and concluded that change in teachers' beliefs is likely to take place only after changes in student learning outcomes are achieved (1986). Richards (2001) points out that the concepts of pedagogical reasoning and decision making underlie teaching skills and techniques. He says, "Teaching is a dynamic process characterized by constant change. Teachers therefore have to make decisions that are appropriate to the specific dynamic of the lesson they are teaching. These kinds of decisions are called interactive decisions." (p. 10). Shulman (1987) takes a more learning-centered approach, characterizing pedagogical reasoning as a process of transformation in which teachers turn the subject matter of instruction into forms that are pedagogically powerful and yet adaptive to the variations in ability and background presented by their students.

Anderson and Peck (2007) acknowledge the "pervasive tension between thinking and doing that characterizes the work of teaching" (p. 19) and go on to describe how a constructivist approach was applied within two university contexts. Of particular interest in our research is how less- as compared to more-experienced teachers reason. Richards, Li and Tang (2001) similarly presume that teachers with differing degrees of teaching experience and subject mater knowledge will adopt different solutions to instructional problems and tasks. They point out that one way of investigating these assumptions -- and of uncovering the different types of knowledge and thinking used in teaching -- is to give teachers with different levels of experience and training particular teaching tasks to consider and then compare the thinking processes they bring to such tasks. They went on to compare how student teachers as compared to experienced teachers planned a reading lesson. The differences between the novice and experienced teachers' approaches to reading texts illustrated striking differences. The novice teachers' lessons centered primarily on linguistic comprehension of the story. They made no use of students' background knowledge and did not seek to engage students in the deeper layers of meaning of the story. Experienced teachers, on the other hand, started with students' understanding and they then went on to suggest strategies to aid student thinking about the text.

We were curious to see if similar results would be found when comparing a less- and more-experienced teacher in university reading classrooms on China's mainland. One interest was to determine if the less-experienced teacher would be more likely to draw upon current theory to which she had been exposed in her teacher training program. Using a case study approach, we compare the two local culture teachers and their decision-making processes. Data were collected through classroom observations and through interviews. In the sections which follow, details are given as to methodology, participants, and procedures.

Methodology

This study is part of a three-year research project which aims to investigate the professional development of English teachers in secondary (senior) schools. A total of 24 teachers (four teachers from six schools) are participants in the larger study. Each is observed and interviewed eight times (four times a year) by two or three observers/researchers. The lead researcher is present for all observations and interviews with all 24 teachers. Three of the schools are located in what are considered to be "developed" areas in China and three located in "developing" areas. Of the 24 participating teachers, six are new teachers, having just graduated. Six are second rank teachers, with 2-5 years of experience. Six are first rank teachers, with 8-10 years of experience, and the final six are senior teachers with over ten years of experience. Lessons observed are chosen at random to ensure the observed teaching practice is part of the everyday practice.

This study uses a case study approach, examining reading lessons taught by two of the teachers, whom we have given the pseudonyms of Susan and Jane. Age 26, Susan has five years of teaching experience and is considered a second rank teacher. Age 38, Jane has sixteen years of teaching

experience and has already been promoted from second rank to first rank and now to senior rank based on a good record of teaching experience, essays, and 24 professional development credits.

Despite age and ranking differences, these two teachers have very similar cultural and educational backgrounds, even graduating from the same university. They now teach in the same school in Guangdong Fushan district, considered to be a developed area. The school requires that all their teachers have a bachelor's degree and two years' teaching experience. The classes observed were conducted with Senior 1 students (approximately 16 years old), with class sizes around 50 students. The students have all learned English for at least six years and are considered to be at an intermediate proficiency level in English. According to the newly-implemented national standard curriculum, students at this level should be able read simplified original reading materials and English newspapers and magazines. They should also be able to make use of learning resources to get information through various channels and use the information to express themselves clearly with the help of the teacher. They also are to be made aware of and given help to form their own learning strategies (Chen, Wang & Cheng, 2003).

The text book used in these particular classes was published by Beijing Normal University. Both classes have been studying Unit 5 and the reading lesson centers on a text called "Dance," which introduces various kinds of dancing (e.g. ballet, break dance, folk dance).

The interest in this study was to examine how each teacher approached the same reading text and how they implemented their reading lessons. The observers made field notes while in the classroom and the lesson was video taped . Follow-up interviews were conducted the same day and were audio-taped and transcribed. The researchers sought to identify the components of the lessons and the pedagogic reasoning processes used by the teachers before, during and after the lesson. In the case of Susan, this was her first time with this group of students. Jane had previously taught her group.

Results and Discussion

As you can see in the chart and discussion of results which follow, the two teachers used very different approaches to the lesson, especially in regard to strategy instruction and to skill focus. The objectives Jane developed for her lesson focused mainly on checking students' general comprehension of the text and their mastery of new vocabulary. She seemed overly concerned with correct pronunciation, which was interesting given that this was a reading lesson. She was also concerned about timing, to the point of cutting short student discussion in the pre-reading activity so as to ensure that she could get through the whole text and finish the two tasks specified in the textbook during the lesson. She seemed to take a more autocratic approach to teaching, distancing herself from the students and showing little actual interest in fostering interaction. Another issue was in lack of scaffolding and assessment -- little was done to check prior knowledge of vocabulary, for example, or to assist students with being aware of their strategy use. To sum, she seemed to take a "read and test" orientation to instruction -- good readers prove their comprehension through answering "test" questions; struggling readers prove their lack of comprehension by being unable to answer the questions, but little is done to further develop either group's skills. In the follow-up interview, she explained that her main concern is to prepare students for examinations. "I know my teaching method is very traditional compared with other young teachers, but my students have a higher rate in passing the college entrance examination. I mainly adopted teaching method of teacher lecturing and students cooperating with teacher using questioning and answering. " (interview with Jane).

Susan takes a much different approach, spending time to try to get the students interested in the text, to share their experiences, and to reflect upon the strategies they do and can use when tackling a text. Her concern is to guide the students and to develop lifelong learning skills. She says, "In the language reading classroom, I think except imparting knowledge to the students, the important thing is to develop students' skills in reading, autonomy, the ability to discover things for themselves." (interview with Susan). Perhaps the biggest difference in the two lessons is in the teacher's decision-making as to the aim of the lesson. For Jane, it seemed to be to get through the materials

and to focus on discrete language (vocabulary, phrases, and pronunciation). For Susan, she very clearly had two main reading strategies in mind that she wanted to teach and time and effort were spent to enthuse the students and to involve them in strategy use. Each of these lessons will be discussed in detail below.

Figure 1. A Comparison of two teachers' approaches to a reading text

	Jane (Senior rank, 16-yrs exp, 38).	Susan (2nd rank, 5 yrs exp, 26).
1 Pre-reading phase	1.1 Survey of favorite music: read from students' survey and question (e.g. "Who is Backstreet Boy"?) but shifted immediately to focus on dance. Stated Purpose: discussion of favorite groups (music) only as a transition to the topic (dance) 1.2 PPT to show names of dances 1.3 Direct students to look at vocab. list. Teacher reads words and class repeats (focus on pronunciation). Tchr explanation of key words (e.g. generation). 1.4 Play tape and listen so as to match music to type of dance. Check answers only. 1.5 Skim text and decide source (book activity – select from choices). Check answer only.	1.1 Free talk re: music preferences (personal preferences). 1.2 Picture prompt of familiar teacher doing an Indian dance. Who is she? What is she doing? What kind of dance? etc. 1.3 PPT to show names of dances. Elicit adjectives f Ss to describe (exciting, cool, skillful) then give more (elegant, solo, dazzling). Stated Purpose: motivate to read, activate schema, share background knowledge 1.4 Play tape and listen to match music to type of dance. Follow-up with "Why do you think so?" 1.5 Decide text source but without looking at the text. "How do you know…"
2 During-reading phase	2.1 Exercise 3: Put sentences into the text where they belong. Check answers by calling on individual students. Occasional commenting by tchr on why an answer is correct.	2.1 Identify structure and sections by looking for subtitles (How many kinds of dance introduced?" 2.2 Ask students to predict the kind of information to be given (if you were introducing a new type of dance, what would you cover?) 2.3 Teach 2 different purposes for reading (get the gist, make contextual connections) 2.4 Scan and fill in a chart

		(get the gist).
		2.5 Ask Ss to confirm predictions re: type of info included
		2.6 Exercise 3 to put sentences in right place. Work with them on where might go, why and how to use discourse devices.
3 After-reading phase	3.1 Underline singers' names in the text. Listen to tape and read aloud the whole text. Focus on pronunciation 3.2 PPT answer questions re: details in the text. Literal level of comprehension. 3.3 Teacher analyzed vocabulary and expressions. 3.4 HW to translate words and phrases selected from the text by the teacher into Chinese	3.1 Remember as much as you can about each dance and share it with a partner. 3.2 HW Recommend websites to share their favorite dances. 3.3 Work with text to: find compound words, phrases expressing time, tenses and how used.
Stated overall approach as a teacher	Lecture, question-answer, read aloud for pronunciation, translate E to C.	Guiding questions, schema and sharing knowledge, building autonomy so as to discover for themselves (deductive approach), task-based learning.
Approach to reading instruction	Reading lesson = vocab, grammar and sentence structures so as to pass examinations.	Reading lesson = teach how to read, overcome worries re: reading in L2, stimulate and motivate, develop rdg skills needed in real life, prediction-confirmation.

Jane -- The High Rank Teacher

Jane began class by collecting and reading aloud students' responses to a survey of their favorite music groups. When the teacher came across a group which she didn't know, she asked the students who they were. This aroused the students' interest and they started to answer the teachers' questions eagerly. Just when they were stimulated to talk about their favorites, however, the teacher shifted the topic to dance. "My purpose of talking about music is to help students to move the topic of dance, since music and dance are closely related, which is also the study topic of today. It is not expected to stay in the topic we are not supposed to focus on too long." (interview with Jane).

In the pre-reading activity, Jane used a prepared Power Point slide to show the names of some common dances, such as Chinese folk dance, break dance, but she didn't go any further to elicit from students any of the features or characteristics of the different dances. Next, she asked students to look at the vocabulary list for the unit and went over each new word or phrase by reading the words and the whole class repeating after her. The teacher then explained some key words -- for example, to study the word, "generation," she gave the students the example "from generation to generation." When asked later about her reasoning when conducting these activities, she responded:

"To ask the students to read the new vocabulary after me is very important because I give them the opportunity to correct their pronunciation. Most of my students have a very good reputation because of their correct pronunciation when they graduated from the high school." (interview with Jane).

The teacher played a tape and asked students to listen to the music extracts and match them with dances as listed in an exercise in their book. The teacher checked answers by asking the students "What kind of dance is it?" but she didn't do anything further to elicit their reasoning processes or to ask them to share background knowledge. It seemed the students didn't have difficulty in identifying the dances, so it would have been to discover their inner thinking.

The teacher approached the reading text itself by asking the students to read the text quickly and then identify "Where is the text from?," an exercise in the book. Several choices were provided: a newspaper, a traditional encyclopedia, a magazine, a cd-rom encyclopedia. The teacher then checked the answer with several students and pointed out the correct answer (a cd-rom encyclopedia). There was no follow-up or discussion of hints used by students to decide the source text.

The teacher then asked the students to complete Exercise 3. A during-reading activity, they were to read and decide where sentences taken from the text should go so as to complete the text. Obviously, the students were expected to use reading strategies and make contextual connections, but the purpose was not mentioned by the teacher and no time was spent on how to use context clues. The reading strategies were specified in the text book, however, along details such as:

- read the whole text to get the general idea;
- look at the missing sentences and read the paragraphs with gaps in detail;
- choose the missing sentence, a) to e), from the list;
- make sure that the sentence fits in with the sentences before and after it;
- look for time references, pronoun reference or contrasting ideas.

The teacher then checked the answers by asking individual student to give their responses. Occasionally, the teacher commented on why an answer was right, such as making sure that the topic of the sentence matches the topic of the paragraph or looking for time references, pronoun reference or contrasting ideas. One student couldn't give a reason to explain why the sentence fit the gap. Instead of giving scaffolding help, the teacher simply responded by saying, "Isn't it because one sentence fits one gap?".

In the next activity, the students were asked to underline each singer's name in the text. They then listened and read along with a tape to read aloud the whole text. The teacher explained: "I think the singers' names are very complicated and difficult to pronounce correctly, so I asked them to pay attention to them and follow the tape to correct their pronunciation." (follow-up interview with Jane).

After reading the text aloud, the students were instructed to answer detailed questions about the reading. These were shown on Power Point and also available in the textbook with most of the questions concerned with literal level comprehension.

To finish off the reading lesson, the teacher verbally highlighted particular language points in the text, including the following: white-haired girl, from one generation to another, be famous for, different types of, including, on special occasions, people of all ages, be dressed in, back and forth, to the rhythm of something, be popular with, in the late eighteenth century, such as, for example, in the 1970s. As homework, the students were asked to translate particular words and phrases (chosen from the text by the teacher) into Chinese.

The major teaching method used was teacher-led question and answer. The teacher dominated speaking time and no free talk was involved at all. As a consequence, the overall lesson was rather boring. There were several times that the observers felt the teacher failed to react to learning opportunities that arose. Even more of an issue was the lack of attention given to the reading process and reading skill and strategy use. The teacher seemed rather unfocused in regard to what she was trying to accomplish in the lesson, saying in the follow-up interview, "I think in the reading lesson, teachers should develop students reading skills, for example, how to get the main idea quickly. At the same time, teachers should help students to pass examinations. In order to do this, I

need to teach my students vocabulary, grammar and sentence structures. Sentence structures are very important, without which, students don't know how to put vocabulary and phrases together."

Susan -- The Second Rank Teacher

To begin class, the teacher had a free talk discussion with the whole class in which she asked them to respond personally about their musical preferences. The talk was moved to dance by showing on Power Point a beautiful picture of the school foreign language teacher (whom the students were familiar with) doing Indian dancing at a Christmas party. "Do you know who the girl is? What is she doing? What kind of dance is she doing?," were questions used by the teacher to get students interested in talk about the picture and the person. Still using Power Point but now showing names of different kinds of dances the teacher asked, "Do you know any kind of these dances?" Samples included: ballet, break dance, folk dance, flamenco, rock and roll, waltz, the cha-cha, rumba, the tango, acrobatics. Next the teacher asked, "Can you think of some adjectives to describe these dances?". Adjectives elicited from students included "beautiful, exciting, cool, skillful, nice" and then the teacher went on to extend and introduced more adjectives including: solo, partnered, elegant, graceful, unique, charming, brilliant, impressive, dazzling, heart stopping, radiant, formal and sensational.

After making students familiar with the names and features of different dances, the teacher asked them to listen to music extracts and identify the dances. Rather than just checking the answers, she asked for explanations:

T: "Why do you think so? ---
S: "I learned ballet and I learnt the music."
T: "How can you know it?"
S: "The rhythm of the music."

Next, the teacher selected several key words important in the text and asked students to infer what the text is about. Given these activities, the students were motivated to interact with the text. As the teacher explained, "The first step of reading is to arouse students' curiosity to go on reading. Guessing can not only activate students' schema but also stimulate students' to share their background knowledge. " (interview with Susan).

As the next step and moving into the during-reading stage, the students were asked to guess the source of the text (newspaper, encyclopedia, etc.) without actually looking at the text. With questions such as, "How do you know where it is from?," the students were guided to notice the structure and the layout. "I didn't expect the students would notice the Microsoft Office page marker in the text which distinguishes the traditional encyclopedia and a cd-rom encyclopedia. I didn't notice that really. It wouldn't surprise me if the students showed me they noticed the small letter printed in the margin which says 'adapted from Dance Microsoft R Encarta". (interview with Susan).

Following this, the teacher asked the students to notice the subtitles of the text by asking, "How many kinds of dances are introduced in the text?". The students correctly identified: ballet, folk dance and popular dance. The teacher then asked the students to predict, "If you are going to tell us a kind of dance which we don't know, what will be introduced about the dance?" The students offered their ideas, such as talk about its history, the features, how to dance, how popular it is and its origins, etc.

Next the teacher drew student attention to strategies by listing and defining them on the Power Point slide, explicitly covering reading for gist and making contextual connections.

After this, the students were asked to scan the text and fill in a form as shown on the Power Point display to compare origins (time, place), people, and an example each for ballet, folk dance, and popular dances. She helped the students to confirm their prediction: "Does the text tell us where and when the dances originate?"

To teach them how to make contextual connections, the teacher firstly made it clear to the students what they were going to learn. She then guided the students through a series of steps: guessing, locating, looking for references, etc. She also used guiding questions such as "Which

sentence is put in which dance? How do you know? What is special in this text?". The teacher also pointed out discourse devices useful when deciding where missing sentences should go (Exercise 3). The teacher explains her pedagogical decision-making during this part of the lesson as follows:

"In this reading lesson, my purpose is to develop two reading skills for the students: reading for gist and making contextual connections. In the classroom instruction, students should learn what a particular strategy is, why, when, where and how they might use it in meaningful reading. This is why I put clear instruction about the use of each strategy in the classroom and I think it went very well in the class." (interview with Susan).

As a post-reading activity, the students were asked to remember as much information as possible about each dance and to share it verbally with a partner.   For homework, the teacher recommended some web sites and asked students to visit the sites and be ready to give their opinions in the next class. She also asked them to look back at the text and to: i) locate all the compound words, ii) find all phrases expressing time, and iii decide tense(s) used and why.

In her lesson, Susan drew upon what she knew about interactive reading and was able to help students use reading strategies targeted. She used top-down reading processes to activate students' schema. During reading, she helped the students to use both top-down and bottom-up strategies and skills. In the post-reading phase, she focused on meta-cognitive awareness of what they had learned while also targeting discrete skills and structures thought to be helpful. Throughout, her aims were to promote autonomous learning. When describing her rationale, she says, "Teachers should be facilitators in helping students in achieving the learning goal. I think teaching methods is more important than explaining the language knowledge. In reading class, I catch more importance to teach students how to read. When then confront a text, how would they approach to the text. I think as teachers, we should help students to overcome their worries when they have to read in a foreign language. We should stimulate their learning motivation and develop the reading skills they will need in their everyday life. In this reading lesson, I have very clear teaching objectives in my mind and I also have very clear concept about the reading skill development so I know how to realize my aim in the classroom." (interview with Susan).

Susan is experiencing what Ambruster and Brown (1984) term "cognitive training with awareness" (cited in Shih, 1992). She is trying to apply what she is learning as a student herself in a master's degree program with what she tries to do with her own students in their language learning classroom. She explained that "This is the first lesson I have had since I joined the master degree study. I may call it a task learning method used in reading class. The greatest advantage I got from my master study is that I bring a clear objective into my teaching, knowing what skills I am going to focus on and how to realize this teaching goal, like the reading class today." (interview with Susan).

The major differences between Jane and Susan's approach to the lesson are summarized as follows:

Jane	Susan
Relatively little detail in planning	Detailed lesson plan
Teaching-focused lesson	Learning- focused lesson
Language-focused objectives	Skill-focused objectives
Rigidly following the text book	A flexible way to deliver the text book
Little student-teacher and no student-student interaction	Good amount of student-teacher and student-student interaction
Vague approach to reading skill development	Clear approach to reading skill development
Whole class teaching	Small group/ whole class teaching
Little personal response from students	Much personal response from students
Specific vocabulary-focused homework	Specific tasked homework to encourage students to discover rules by themselves
Use the text as a basis for reading for information	Interact with the text pedagogically

Another difference that emerged was the teacher's interest in reflecting upon and improving her teaching. Jane is content to continue to teach in this way because she is able to point to good examination results from her students. There seems little interest in improving or being critical of herself so as to improve her effectiveness. Susan, on the other hand, is critical of an already-good lesson. She commented: "… I didn't pay enough attention to some details, for example, the lead-in activity has been taken up too much time and didn't have the effect I planned to." (interview with Susan). She admits that a change has come about through her involvement in professional development and, it may be that her teaching style was more similar to Jane's until recently. She also is able to bring her experience as a teacher into her graduate program of instruction, so is able to consider and link theory to practice. She states: "The master degree study is a great choice to theorize my previous teaching practice. Instead of delivery the textbook blindly, I am now able to adopt the teaching methods consciously in my teaching. For example, in the grammar lesson, I will use a deduction method by having students to discover the rules by themselves, which is totally different from before, where I will just explain everything to students." (interview with Susan).

Conclusions

Beliefs are thought to drive actions. The factors influencing Jane's classroom decision making reflects what she calls a "traditional" way of learning and teaching English, the importance of high examination scores for her students, and what she views as her role in the classroom. In regard to reading instruction in particular, she herself does not seem to clearly understand the nature of reading very well. She focuses on her language knowledge (pronunciation, vocabulary, grammar) without updating her subject knowledge (reading strategy instruction).

Susan is better able to make informed decisions in her teaching. For example, she clearly understands the nature of reading processes and is confident to lead her students to more autonomous learning. Experience linked to professional development has helped her understand how to model, guide and develop strategy use and to employ a discourse approach to texts when working with her students. She has been able to update her subject knowledge, acquire a deeper understanding of the subject matter and present subject matter in appropriate ways in her classroom. Moreover, she is willing to reflect on her teaching effectiveness and is willing to continue to evolve her belief system.

Perhaps one of the most important outcomes of this study is the conclusion that teachers need to learn while teaching. Learning teaching is a desire to move forward, to learn from what happens, to get feedback from others, to increase openness to the possibility of change. No matter how many years of teaching experience one has, "Learning teaching is an aware and active use of the experiential learning cycle in one's own life and work. Learning teaching is a belief that creativity, understanding, experience and character continue growing throughout one's life."(Scrivener, 2002, p. 195)

Although only a small-scale study, it is unusual to be able to examine how two teachers approach the same reading text as they design and implement instruction. It is also interesting to gain insights into their reflections and their decision-making processes. Finally, we hope that this study can assist teachers new to the teaching of reading strategies and skills.

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