

**А. Фурсенко** (ГУО «Гимназия № 10 имени Митрополита Филарета (Вахромеева) г. Гродно»)

**Т. А. Качан** (научный руководитель)

## **READ TO SUCCEED OR HOW TO BOOST READING LITERACY IN ENGLISH**

Reading literacy is the foundation for pupils' academic success and personal growth. The ability to read includes reading for the pleasure it provides in allowing us to experience different worlds, other cultures, new ideas as well as encompasses reflecting on written texts and other sources of information as tools to achieve individual and societal goals. This view is increasingly relevant in today's society, where greater emphasis continues to be placed on pupils' ability to use the information they gain from reading. Emphasis is shifting from demonstrating fluency and basic comprehension to demonstrating the ability to apply what is understood or comprehended to new situations or projects.

We hold that reading literacy is a comprehensive set of reading skills and abilities that are needed to work with texts effectively. Reading literacy does not refer to a mere speed reading of words, phrases or full texts. What is more, reading literacy refers to being able to comprehend the contents properly, find both explicit and implicit meanings, analyze the content and the information obtained; and being able to interpret the content properly and pass it on. In the first place, however, it is the ability to make one's own judgments about texts, and apply their content to innovate and create new knowledge as a result of the information received. We hold reading literacy to be one of the key skills in academic setting, since the vast amount of knowledge is acquired through books, monographs and written documents; and we consider it a core competence in the process of transforming information into understanding.

In order to acquire knowledge of the world and themselves, readers can learn from a number of text types. Each text type follows conventional forms and rules which aid the reader's interpretation of the text. Any given text type can take many forms and combinations of forms. These include traditional written forms, such as books, magazines, documents, and newspapers, as well as digital forms that include numerous ways of communicating via the Internet and websites where a text is often integrated with various multimedia formats. Whether reading online or printed text, discussing what they have read with different groups of individuals allows pupils to construct text meaning in a variety of contexts. Social interactions about reading in one or more communities of readers can be instrumental in helping pupils gain an understanding and appreciation of texts and other sources of information.

Throughout the world, reading literacy is directly related to the reasons people read. Broadly, these reasons include reading for pleasure and personal interest, learning, personal growth and participation in society. Effective reading assumes using various reading techniques and strategies. There are four main techniques of reading academic texts: skimming, scanning, intensive and extensive reading. Each is used for a specific purpose. It's essential to teach pupils to understand and keep the purpose of their reading of any textual material in mind. It will not only make their reading effective, improve their reading literacy and help to save time but teach them different strategies for reading different materials and how not to get lost in a host of information modern world offers them. Information has been the most valuable resource and dangerous weapon of society for years. Reading with a purpose will help pupils to process large amounts of information to fulfill set goals.

Language acquisition is a process that engages different skills and is therefore influenced by them. We believe reading is one of the best contributors to the journey of learning a new language and although its advantages seem to be exclusive to reading comprehension, it involves other skills to a high degree as well. Reading texts in the original aids in boosting reading literacy both in foreign and native languages as well as in raising cultural awareness of the pupils. The ability to achieve goals set before reading as well as skills to deal with reading material of any difficulty are sure to make pupils confident and interested in learning more.

Learning a foreign language pupils have to deal with a number of texts of various types. As a rule, they read them in the same way trying to understand every single word but by doing so they often fail to grasp the idea of the text and lose time on rereading it again and again. Such failures may discourage pupils and make them think they have a poor command of English. Yet the problem is they have chosen the wrong reading technique and strategies. Moreover, they may read without a clear understanding of the purpose for reading and what they should know having read the text. Pupils should be taught to focus on the vocabulary they know and use English as a means of learning something interesting about the world they live in.

The opinion poll held among the pupils and teachers of Gymnasium № 10 of Grodno reveals their reading habits and reasons for reading. The majority of the respondents (93,6 %) find reading significant in modern life but only 16,2 % spend more than 3 hours on reading per week. The findings show that the prevailing purposes for reading include studies, self-development and entertainment. Reading for news and work are less common among the respondents the majority of which are pupils. 75,9 % of the respondents read texts in the original and practically a half can grasp the main idea in 15 seconds. We may presume intensive reading is the prevailing technique among the respondents for 64,4 % admit they would consult a dictionary when they see unknown words in the text. We believe language must be perceived as a means of getting information and pupils shouldn't be afraid of unfamiliar words but concentrate on the information they get as well as

the words and the constructions they know. 87,5 % of the respondents understand the importance of raising reading literacy and would like to learn how to read faster and understand everything. The findings of this survey show the interest of the pupils in developing their reading skills and boosting reading literacy.

To realize this task, we have analyzed English Student's Books Form 10 for advanced level to see how they develop pupils' reading competence and what tasks aid in developing reading literacy. We may conclude that a third of the total number of exercises is aimed at developing reading skills and these exercises imply usage of various reading techniques (skimming 35,9 %, intensive reading 32,7 %, scanning 22,6 %, extensive reading 8,8 %) and strategies. Nevertheless, some pupils lack a clear understanding of how to deal with different texts and need guidelines so as to improve their reading skills and consequently boost their reading literacy in English. Therefore, we've decided to make a "Read to Succeed" Training Kit which contains a number of tips in the form of guidelines following which one would definitely achieve success and cope with any text effectively and quickly.

Most pupils wish they could collect information from books in a quicker and more efficient way but fail to achieve set goals and have to spend much time on rereading the material. We have worked out guidelines that would help to skim effectively. When skimming, pupils should keep the purpose for reading in mind, pay attention to the key words and deliberately skip parts that provide details. Instead of reading every word, they should focus on the first and last sentences of paragraphs, bold words, and text features. The following activities will help students to develop their skills necessary for effective skimming: look through the text and write down the keywords and phrases; use the text to send a telegram on the issue discussed; highlight the 5 most important facts about the issue; determine the significance of the information received for people; read the title and write questions to the text, then make up a list of words that may occur in the text to answer each question; etc.

Scanning is similar to skimming, but the purpose is to find something specific within the reading material. That's why pupils should have a clear understanding what information they scan for, move their eyes quickly over a page until they locate the necessary information and then slow down to read the relevant section more thoroughly. The following activities will help students to develop their skills necessary for effective scanning: find information in the text (data, words, phrases) confirming facts from the table; fill out a mental map (diagram, table); fill in the graphic organizer "Fishbone" / "Problem solving"; find similarities/differences in an illustration (drawing, photo, diagram, graph, table) and in a text (story, advertisement, announcement); compare messages (tickets, diagrams, signs, diagrams, tables) and find differences; etc.

To read intensively is to completely deconstruct a text, with the goal of absorbing as much meaning from it as possible. The following reading guidelines will help pupils achieve set goals and improve their command of English: set a purpose for reading and keep it in mind while reading; be alert to the first/ last

sentences which contain main ideas; try to jot down notes and ideas in the margins; underline unfamiliar words or phrases, but do not stop the flow of your reading; when you have finished, go back to the unfamiliar vocabulary, look up every word, phrase, or collocation that you do not understand; apply what you've learnt. These activities may help students to develop their skills necessary for effective intensive reading: identify different contextual meanings of the same word; name the word which associates with all the words of the thematic series; compare the concepts expressed by these words with the main idea of the text, say what they have in common; read the sentences (abstracts, small texts) and write down all the verbs with prepositions of movement (time, place); mark the boundaries of each nominal group (predicate group) with vertical dashes; fill in the gaps with conjunctions in accordance with the meaning of the sentences; read the sentences and find polysemantic words in them, specify the meanings of these words that are new to you; etc.

To read extensively is to simply read as much as possible, without concerning oneself with the minutiae of meaning and occasional unknown words. To benefit from extensive reading pupils must read texts that are interesting, level-appropriate, and of moderate length. The following activities will help students to develop their skills necessary for effective extensive reading: read an abstract and try to decipher the meaning of unknown words from the context; read an abstract and find words close in meaning; find the words derived from the key word; etc.

They say "Practice makes it perfect". Pupils should read as much as possible using the most appropriate technique and strategies to achieve the goal set for reading and not only develop their reading skills but also their ability to understand, evaluate and use the texts they read to expand their knowledge about the world they live in, their capabilities to comprehend, analyze and use the information gained to fully participate in the life of our society. "Read to Succeed" Training Kit will provide them with the guidelines which help them to read faster and more effectively both in English and their native language.