Teaching Reading Strategies in an Ongoing EFL University Reading Classroom

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This article reports a study of strategy training for reading in an ongoing university foreign language reading classroom. The training method was modified from the procedure developed by Brown and Palincsar (1984), which involved four concrete reading strategies: summarizing, questioning, clarifying, and predicting. The following research questions were addressed: “Does strategy training enhance the reading ability of EFL college students?” If so, “How is the effectiveness of reading strategy training related to the reading proficiency of the students?” “Which types of reading comprehension questions are affected by strategy training?” Results show that strategy training is effective in enhancing EFL reading, and that the effectiveness of the training varies with L2 reading proficiency. The results also indicate that students' performance on certain types of reading comprehension questions is improved by the training method. These findings suggest that foreign language reading pedagogy, especially for adult students in academic settings, should include explicit and direct strategy teaching.

Background and Research Problem

Reading strategies indicate how readers conceive a task, what textual cues they attend to, how they make sense of what they read, and what they do when they do not understand (Block, 1986). They range from simple fix-up strategies such as simply rereading difficult segments and guessing the meaning of an unknown word from context, to more comprehensive strategies such as summarizing and relating what is being read to the reader’s background knowledge (Janzen, 1996).

Research into reading strategies of native English speakers has concentrated on describing those strategies which are involved in understanding. A vast amount of research in first language reading and reading