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READING ACADEMIC TEXTS: GAMIFICATION

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StratApp

- KA 2 (Erasmus +)
- 2016-1-ES01-KA203-025164. *Gamifying Academic English Skills in Higher Education: Reading Academic English App (StratApp)*
- Aim: improve the English academic reading skills of university students
- December 2016 – September 2019

StratApp

■ Partners:

- Universitat Rovira i Virgili (URV)
- Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona (UAB)
- Université de Pau et des Pays de l'Adour (UPPA)
- Wyższa Szola Lingwistyczna (WSL)
- Amistad ScP
- Consorci de Serveis Universitaris de Catalunya (CSUC)

Phases of the project

1. Identification of reading skills and strategies
2. Pedagogical design of the app
3. Elaboration of the teacher's manual and online guide book
4. Development of the app for Android
5. Creation of the app Content Management System (CSM) and exploitation database

Academic purposes for reading

1. Reading to search for information
2. Reading for quick understanding
3. Reading to learn
4. Reading to integrate information
5. Reading to evaluate, critique, and use information
6. Reading for general comprehension

Grabe (2009: 8)

General skills and strategies

1. Scanning
2. Skimming
3. Word recognition & vocabulary
4. Syntactic parsing
5. Recognising discourse structure/genre
6. Reading strategies that support comprehension
7. Fluency
8. Critical reading

Skills vs. strategies

Strategies represent **conscious** decisions taken by the reader,
skills are deployed **unconsciously**.

(Urquhart & Weir 1988: 97).

Scanning

- Purpose: locate specific symbols or groups of symbols (word, phrase, figure, date).
- Operations → looking for/matching:
 - Specific words/phrases
 - Figures/percentages
 - Dates of particular events
 - Specific items in an index/inventory

Skimming - purposes

- Establishing the general sense of the text
- Quickly establishing a macropropositional structure as an outline summary
- Establishing relevance of text to needs

Skimming - operations

- Identifying source
- Reading titles & subtitles
- Reading abstract carefully
- Reading introductory and concluding paragraphs carefully
- Reading first & last sentence of each paragraph carefully
- Identifying discourse markers
- Noting repeated key content words
- Identifying markers of importance
- Skipping clusters of detail

Vocabulary – operations

- Building word-recognition automaticity with high-frequency words
- Developing a large recognition vocabulary
- Looking for structural clues
- Determining grammatical function
- Using morphology: internal structure
- Inferencing meaning from context

Vocabulary – operations

- Using dictionary only for key words
- Relating new word to known word
- Contrast word with another one in the sentence
- Using knowledge of the world
- Relating a word to a word in L1
- Recognizing variance in meanings in words

Vocabulary - sources

1. West's (1953) General Service List
(<http://www.newgeneralservicelist.org/>)
2. Academic Word List
(<http://www.victoria.ac.nz/lals/resources/academicwordlist/>)
3. Discipline-specific vocabulary – **education.**

Syntactic parsing

- Purpose: process the structure of sentences.
- Operations:
 - Recognizing syntactic categories for new words
 - Using syntactic information as context information
 - Disambiguating lexical meanings and discourse organization cse2
- Aspects to focus on: passives, delimitation of heavy NPs, distinguishing nouns from verbs.

Diapositiva 14

cse2

Disambiguating discourse organization? M'he aturat un moment en aquest punt tinc el dubte de si és un sol punt o hauriende ser dos. Can discourse organization be disambiguated or rather identified or recognised? Igual és una cosa molt bàsica que hauria de saber però,glups, no ho sé...

carne sanahuges escoda; 11/01/2018



Recognising discourse organisation/ genre

- Purpose: identify general and local features of texts.
- Operations:
 - Recognizing genre clues
 - Determining main ideas
 - Recognizing discourse patterns in text

Recognising text structure

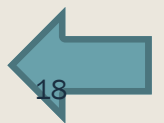
- Recognizing rhetorical patterns:
 - Comparison and contrast
 - Cause and effect
 - Chronological order
 - Classification
 - Process
 - Definition

Genre

- Situational characteristics
- Genre markers
- Cohesive devices 
- Lexical signalling 
- Patterns of co-occurring linguistic features
- Information structuring
- Topic continuity systems

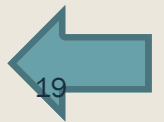
Cohesive devices

- Reference words and substitutes (personal pronouns, demonstratives, *so, one(s), the same*, etc.)
- Ellipsis
- Comparison (*similar, same, identical, equal, different, other, additional, else, likewise, so, more, fewer, less*, etc.)
- Lexical cohesion (repetition, synonyms, near synonyms, superordinate and general words)



Lexical signalling

- Conjunctions
- Transition adverbials
- Lexical words
- Transition sentences
- E.g. *and, namely, but, in spite of this, as a result, because, since, for the purpose of, thus, in order to, if/then, so, therefore, the reason, led to, provide, required,*



Reading strategies that support comprehension

- Purpose: understand the main idea of a text, by reading it carefully.
- Strategies:
 - Separating explicitly stated main ideas from supporting detail by recognising topic sentences or lexical indicators of importance
 - Generating a representation of the text as a whole

Reading strategies that support comprehension

- Understanding the development of an argument and/or logical organisation
- Making propositional information inferences, typically answering questions with where and when
- Making explanatory inferences concerned with motivation, cause, consequence, answering questions with why and how.

Fluency

- Purpose: push students to read faster than they would.
- Minimum speed for good comprehension is 200 wpm.
- Activities:
 - Paced & timed readings + exercises.
 - Aim: score 7-8/10
 - Results logged in the app, so students can keep track of their progress.

Critical reading

- Recognizing author's purpose
- Recognizing author's point of view
- Making inferences
- Drawing conclusions
- Separating fact from opinion
- Separating own opinion from text
- Evaluating arguments

References

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Thank you!