The Efficacy of Novel Pre-activity Tasks on Macroskills: The Case of Group Discussion on Reading Comprehension

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Abstract—The main concern of most researchers in the field of second and foreign language teaching is lessening the problems and eliminating the hinders on the way of learning a language. The importance of reading skill in the process of teaching and learning different languages is undeniable for everyone. The main aim of this study was to examine the effects of group discussion strategy as a pre- activity task on reading ability. To this aim, 27 Iranian EFL learners, who were at the same level –intermediate- studying at Shokuh and Safir Institutes, Birjand, Iran were chosen. Two groups- one control and one experimental group- were studied. In control group the conventional method was used in teaching reading, while in experimental group, group discussion pre-activity task was administered. Both groups met the same level -Intermediate. At the end, the obtained data of the tests was analyzed by SPSS software. According to the obtained data, it can be strongly concluded that group discussion has no significant effect on reading comprehension. This study can help teachers and syllabus designers in choosing and applying an effective pre-activity task which really help the learners in reading classes.

Index Terms—reading comprehension, pre-activity task, group discussion, EFL learners

I. INTRODUCTION

The macro skill which is under analysis in this study is reading comprehension. In most of foreign language teaching environments, reading attracts more attention than other skills. Among the large number of definitions for reading comprehension, it is recorded that all of them combine reading and understanding with each other (Duke and Pearson, 2002; Grabe, 1995; Nuttall, 1996). In fact, it is believed that reading is the most important skill among other ones. First, reading is important as it eases the learning of other skills. In another words, if we learn reading and start reading texts in second language, writing will become easier for us too. Second, reading is essential as the fundamental aim of learners. Many learners try to learn second language to read texts and it's very disappointing if they do not understand what they are reading. Third, as Nunan (2006) indicated, unlike speaking, reading is not a task that everyone learns how to do. So learning this skill needs a huge amount of money, time, and efforts (Nunan, 2006). Reading comprehension is not something just to know the meaning of words; in fact, students should learn how to comprehend a text.

As it is believed that reading comprehension is the vital skill in ESL/EFL situations, different strategies are used in the processes of dealing with this skill.

Bölükbaş (2013) defines reading comprehension strategy as

Reading comprehension strategies are the cognitive strategies that the reader uses pre-reading, during reading and post-reading to understand the text better. There are some strategies that the reader uses consciously and unconsciously… the students use the skills that they acquire in normal conditions automatically and they apply strategies when they face a problem in the text (p.2148)

In addition, he believes that the principal purpose of using reading comprehension strategies is to ascertain that the text is understood accurately and easily (Bölükbaş, 2013). According to reviewed literature of this study, generally most researchers and theorists believe that strategies can be categorized as pre- reading strategies, while- reading strategies, and post- reading strategies (Bezci, 1998; Karatay, 2007 and 2009; Lau, 2006; Mihara, 2011; Özbay, 2009; Yang, 2006 cited in Bölükbaş, 2013).

As soon as these skills became eminent in educational situations, different approaches and methods were used to teach them in different eras. Each approach was a reaction to the shortcomings of the previous ones, because in all academic situations, the main goal of teachers and educators is to ease the learning for students. In other words, "Since the early 1980s, many scholars who study the teaching of English and language arts have been engaged in an extended exploration of the nature of effective instruction" (Applebee, Langer, Nystrand, & Gamoran, 2003, p. 685). As a result, teachers should perform some activities which help students to learn skills better. In another words, choosing helpful

activities is a challenging activity for teachers. At first, these activities were used randomly. Then, the activities categorized as pre, while, and post- activities to facilitate the use of them for teachers and educators.

In teaching skills, the importance of using pre- activity tasks cannot be denied. Due to their noticeable effectiveness, the need for becoming familiar with these pre-activities is necessary. Furthermore, as learning is a complex process, using novel pre- activity tasks will motivate them. One of the novel pre- activity tasks is using group discussion.

Using group discussion is a pre- activity task which is known as collaborative learning, cooperative learning, peer learning, group learning, formal learning groups, and study teams (Johnson, Johnson, & Smith, 1991). Using group discussion as a pre-activity task means setting up some cooperative groups of students in class and asking them to discuss a specific topic with each other. Also Piaget (1928 and 1932) pointed out that collaborative learning has a vital role in constructive cognitive development. Group discussion is a student- student interaction, which is used to promote their learning as they have the same goal. Furthermore, "learning in a small group is one of the choices the teacher makes for increasing students' motivation" (Wichadee, 2013, p.107).

II. Review of Literature

A. Reading Comprehension

As reading is the macro skill taught and assessed in this study, emphasizing on its process seems necessary to be clarified in the literature review. There are many theories and perceptions about teaching and learning reading skill. For instance, Rumelhart (1977) believes that reading in the most simplistic manner is the interaction between the text and the reader. He adds that this interaction is affected by different factors such as: the readers' own experience with their community, school and cultural experience and the extend these relate to the text, as well as their individual personality, the combination of these reader factors with textual features (structures, syntax, grammar and vocabulary), and the correspondence between the reader and the text. In this regard, Rosenblatt (1993) in her theory also describes reading as an interactive process used the terms aesthetic and efferent (nonaesthetic) reading to refer to reading for enjoyment and reading for knowledge in the content areas, such as science and social studies.

As a different perspective on reading skill, Burns, Roe, and Ross (1992) introduce the reading as a life skill that by combining nine aspects of the reading process – sensory, perceptual, sequential, experiential, thinking, learning, associational, affective, and constructive- the reading process becomes facilitated. Bouwer (2000) comments on the Burns, Roe, and Ross's interpretation and states that the sensory, perceptual, and sequential aspects depict the decoding process of reading and the six remaining aspects characterize the comprehension process of reading.

Besides the previous comments on different aspects of reading skill, another interpretation is expressed by Goodman (1996). He describes reading processing strategies by focus on the use of three Cueing Systems (Phonological and visual/orthographic information, Language structure, Meaning) and use of Self-Correction during figuring out a text's message.

Other important issues that are directly related to the notion of reading ability and should come into account in this part of this study are different theories on reading comprehension and reading strategies. Regarding reading strategies, Coiro (2003) as one of the figures in this area states that certain studies in second language contexts have indicated that the productive use of reading strategies results in reading comprehension. He also adds that poor readers peruse all types of texts in the same manner.

B. Pre-reading Activities

Bilokcuoğlu (2011) reports that

"the recent studies conducted on reading comprehension have revealed that pre-reading activities have helpful effects in stimulating readers' background knowledge which is required for a total reading comprehension. Those studies demonstrate that pre-reading activities not only prepare the reader for the following concept but also facilitate him/her to connect the new concept more meaningfully to the prior knowledge, which will lead to an easier and a more enjoyable reading task. Thus, pre-reading activities are well-meant to trigger suitable knowledge structures or to provide the ground for the necessary knowledge that readers lack." (p. 81)

C. Group Discussion

Cooperative learning is one strategy for group instruction which is under the learner-centered approach. Therefore, some of the definitions, perceptions, and studies done in this area are presented in this part as well. To begin, it is worth mentioning that many educators express different the definitions of cooperative learning. For example, Slavin (1995) defines cooperative learning as an imperative and directive plan in which learners organize in small groups to support each other in the process of learning. Brown (1994) says that in cooperative learning, students work with each other in groups and like a team work, they try to reach the main purpose. In addition, Kessler (1992) defines reading comprehension as working together in groups and learn new information with the asset of reciprocal learning

Cooperative learning is a teaching strategy in which small groups, which have members with different level, use a variety of learning activities to enhance their understanding of the lesson. Furthermore, Richards & Rodgers (2001) indicated that "a principal proposition of Cooperative Language Learning is that learners develop communicative competence in a language by having social interaction in structured situations" (p.194)

Some of the scholars and researchers suggest different techniques and guidelines for better performing of group-discussion activity. For instance, some of them (Emdin, 2010; Larson, 2000; Mitchell, 2010) believe that the teacher should explain in details the students' role in a cooperative classroom. Furthermore, the teacher should propose some discussions for students and give the students motivation to participate in groups. Teachers should organize the groups in a way that all students have the same participation.

Some others (Atwood, Turnball, & Carpendale, 2010; Larson, 2000; Mitchell, 2010) state that the teachers should provide a comfortable situation for students which enables them to participates with other members of the group. They also suggest a solution. They say that the best way to increase this level of confidence is to permit learners to speak in their own groups at first. Then, they will be prepared to speak properly for all students and share their ideas in classroom.

Considering all aforementioned definitions, views, and studies done on reading comprehension, pre-activity tasks, and group discussion, research questions, study method, results, conclusion, etc. are mentioned in the following parts.

D. Research Question and Hypothesis

RQ. Does group discussion strategy as a pre- activity task have a significant effect on reading comprehension ability of Iranian intermediate EFL learners?

H0. Group discussion strategy as a pre- activity task has no significant effect on reading comprehension ability of Iranian intermediate EFL learners.

III. METHOD

A. Participants

The participants of this study are 27 Iranian EFL learners, who are at the same level –intermediate- studying at Shokuh and Safir Institutes, Birjand, Iran. Their age range is among 16 to 25. Both male and female students were entered to this study. These participants were in two classes- 13 participants in the control group and 14 participants in the experimental group (group discussion group). The specifications of these 27 participants are given in table 1.

TABLE 1.
PARTICIPANTS' SPECIFICATIONS

		Number	Percent
Gender	Male	10	35%
	Female	17	65%
Age	16-20	16	58%
	20-25	11	42%

B. Instruments

In this part all instruments and materials which were used for conducting this research will be mentioned. The materials and instruments which used for carrying on this study are as follow.

TOEFL Tests: TOEFL test (Test of English as a Foreign Language) is one of the most acceptable and well-known tests all over world. Nowadays, most researchers use TOEFL tests to obtain their required data as there is no doubt about their validity and reliability. TOEFL tests are in two formats: PBT (Paper-based Test) and iBT (Internet-based Test). Although iBT innovated in late 2005, it could replace progressively PBT and CBT (Computer-based Test). By the way, PBT is still in use in some regions. TOEFL test integrates all four skills –reading, writing, speaking, and listening- to measure the overall skill of communicating in foreign language. In details, in a TOEFL test, the testee is subject to a reading test and has to read a text and answer a number of questions, a writing test and has to write properly about a certain topic, a listening test and has to listen to conversations and answer questions, and finally a speaking test and has to speak about a certain topic.

In this study, the researcher preferred to use a Paper-Based version of TOEFL taken from *Longman Preparation Course for the TOEFL Test (the Paper Based Test)* (Phillips, 2005). As only intermediate students are involve in this study, at first, the researcher administered a TOEFL proficiency test to all participants to ensure that all of them met the intermediate level. Then, one TOEFL reading comprehension test was used at the outset of the study as the pre-test in both groups. This pre-test was also used to check the homogeneity of the participants and to ensure that their reading comprehension ability was also at the same level. Additionally, one TOEFL reading test was administered in these two groups at the end of treatment as the post-test. The readability scale was used to make sure that the tests are at the same level.

SPSS (Statistical Package for the Social Science) Software: SPSS software is worldwide software which is used for statistical analysis to a great degree. All essential statistical analysis of this study was done by use of 20th version of SPSS software. The data collected from TOEFL tests were analyzed by SPSS software.

C. Procedure

In this study, two groups- one control and one experimental group- were studied. In control group the conventional method was used, while in experimental group, group discussion pre-activity task was administered. Both groups met

the same level -Intermediate. In each session, reading comprehension was taught based on this specific pre- activity task. In the first session, before performing any treatment, one pre-test of reading comprehension was administered in each group. Then, the treatments were conducted in 16 sessions. The levels of all tests were checked by readability scale which revealed that all tests were at the same level of difficulty. A TOEFL proficiency test was used to check the homogeneity of the participants. After that, the process of teaching was started and this pre- activity task was applied in the experimental group. In the last session, a reading comprehension test was administered in each of those two groups. At the end, the obtained data of the tests was analyzed by SPSS software which are revealed in the next part.

IV. RESULTS

At the scratch, a TOEFL proficiency test was applied to all subjects of the study to assure their general language proficiency level as intermediate. The results showed that the mean and standard deviation of all subjects are 431.94 and 37.59 which categorized them as intermediate learners.

After the TOEFL proficiency test which confirmed the participants' general English proficiency level as intermediate, two pretests were administered to check the homogeneity of the students according to their ability of reading comprehension. Therefore, an independent sample t-test is presented for each of the aforementioned pretests and posttests related to the research questions and hypotheses.

The effect of group discussion as a pre-activity on reading comprehension of Iranian EFL learners is investigated in this part. At the end of this section the research question which is "Does group discussion strategy as a pre- activity task have a significant effect on reading comprehension ability of Iranian intermediate EFL learners?" will be answered. At first the homogeneity of the control group and discussion group as the experimental group should be supported. For this end, the following data are analyzed in next tables.

TABLE 2.
GROUP STATISTICS

	Pretest	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
pretest reading scores	pretest discussion group	14	4.5714	1.28388	.34313
	pretest control group	13	4.7385	1.51632	.42055

This table illustrates that the mean score and standard deviation for discussion group is 4.5 and 1.2, respectively. On the other hand, mean score and standard deviation for control group is 4.7 and 1.5. So these data revealed that these two groups were the same at the scratch. In another words, experimental and control groups are homogeneous.

The next table tries to prove this reality by inferential statistics.

TABLE 3.
INDEPENDENT SAMPLES TEST

		Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means							
		F	Sig.	T	Df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
									Lower	Upper
Pretest reading scores	Equal variances assumed	.767	.389	-.310	25	.759	-.16703	.53934	-1.27782	.94375
	Equal variances not assumed			-.308	23.629	.761	-.16703	.54277	-1.28819	.95413

In table 3, t= -.310, df=25, p= .7, as a result, it can be implied that there is no difference between control and discussion groups. So they are homogeneous.

The next table shows the differences between experimental and control groups after treatment.

TABLE 4.
GROUP STATISTICS

	Posttest	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
posttest reading scores	posttest discussion group	14	5.7214	1.36786	.36558
	posttest control group	13	4.9846	2.01571	.55906

As table 4 represented, mean score and standard deviation for discussion groups are 5.7 and 1.3. Mean score and standard deviation for control group are 4.9 and 2.01. So it can be said that although the mean score of discussion group is more than control group, this better performance is not significance as showed in next table. To investigate whether the group discussion effect is significant or not, an independent sample t-test was administered and the data are presented in the following table.

TABLE 5
INDEPENDENT SAMPLES TEST

		Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means					95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
		F	Sig.	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	Lower	Upper
Posttest reading scores	Equal variances assumed	2.120	.158	1.119	25	.274	.73681	.65853	-.61946	2.09309
	Equal variances not assumed			1.103	20.925	.283	.73681	.66797	-.65262	2.12625

In table 5, it is displayed that t= 1.1, df= 25, and p= .27. As significant value is .27 > .05, it can be concluded that the effect of group discussion as pre-activity has not significant. As a result this null hypothesis which was "group discussion as a pre-activity task has no significant effect of reading comprehension of Iranian intermediate EFL learners" is accepted.

V. DISCUSSION

Group discussion has no significant effect on reading comprehension, and this outcome may be followed in different factors. First, as the researcher cannot monitor all groups, and she has to supervise small groups of participants during each session so the subjects may discuss and talk about other topics. Second, all subjects in each group may not participate in discussions. Some ones are shy or introvert and they refuse to take part in discussions. Third, because of the lack of time the subjects do not have enough time to bring up all ideas. As McCafferty, Jacobs, and Iddings (2006) believe that despite the many benefits of group activities, difficulties also arise – difficulties that have led some educators to give up on applying group work. These difficulties include "members not participating, groups not getting along, or learners unable to do the task. Cooperative learning arose in mainstream education as an effort to address such difficulties and to generally expedite student-student interaction". (p. 3)

VI. CONCLUSION

As discussed in the first parts of this study, the main concern of most researchers in the field of second and foreign language teaching is lessening the problems and eliminating the hinders on the way of learning a language. Consequently, many researchers have found out that using pre-activities in the process of teaching second/foreign languages is helpful. Therefore, the main aim of this study was to examine the effects of group discussion as a pre-activity task on reading comprehension. According to the obtained data of the previous sections, it can be strongly concluded that group discussion has no significant effect on reading comprehension. The reasons can be studied in another study. As one of those reasons, maybe learners do not carefully and correctly do their task and they talk about many other topics in their mother tongue. Therefore, as a kind of implication, this study can help teachers in choosing an effective pre-activity task. In other words, teachers and educators can use other pre-activity tasks like pre-question and visual aids in teaching reading except for group discussion. In the cases they think it is helpful and want to use this pre-activity task, they should reconsider the ways of implementing this task or carefully monitor their learners and their activities.

VII. SUGGESTIONS FOR FURTHER RESEARCH

Further research which is directly or indirectly related to the theme of this study can be also done. This study focused on the effects of group discussion on reading ability. Other research can be done to examine the effects of other pre-activity tasks on reading skill.

Besides, this research emphasized on reading comprehension and ignored the effect of this pre- activity on writing, speaking and listening. Therefore, some other research can be employed to check the effects of pre- activity tasks on other skills.

The effect of group discussion novel pre- activity task has been examined on reading comprehension of intermediate level. Other studies can be designed and done to analyze the effects of pre-activity tasks on Iranian EFL learners with other levels of proficiency.

ACKNOWLEDGMENT

APPENDIX A. (READING TESTS)

Reading Comprehension Test 1

Niagara Falls, one of the most famous North American natural wonders, has long been a popular tourist destination. Tourists today flock to see the two falls that actually constitute Niagara Falls: the 173-foot-high Horseshoe Falls on the Canadian side of the Niagara River in the Canadian province of Ontario and the 182-foot-high American Falls on the U.S. side of the river in the state of New York. Approximately 85 percent of the water that goes over the falls actually goes over Horseshoe Falls, with the rest going over American Falls.

Most visitors come between April and October, and it is quite a popular activity to take a steamer out onto the river and right up to the base of the falls for a close-up view. It is also possible to get a spectacular view of the falls from the strategic locations along the Niagara River, such as Prospect Point of Table Rock, or from one of the four observation towers which have heights up to 500 feet.

Tourists have been visiting Niagara Falls in large numbers since the 1800's; annual visitation now averages above 10 million visitors per year. Because of concern that all these tourists would inadvertently destroy the natural beauty of this scenic wonder, the State of New York in 1885 created Niagara Falls Park in order to protect the land surrounding American Falls. A year later Canada created Queen Victoria Park on the Canadian side of the Niagara, around Horseshoe Falls. With the area surrounding the falls under the jurisdiction of government agencies, appropriate steps could be taken to preserve the pristine beauty of the area.

1. What is the major point that the author is making in the passage?

A. Niagara Falls can be viewed from either the American side or Canadian side.

B. A trip to the United States isn't complete without a visit to Niagara Falls.

C. Niagara Falls has an interesting history.

D. It has been necessary to protect Niagara Falls from the many tourists who go there.

2. The word "flock" in line 2 can be best replaced by

A. come by plane

B. come in large numbers

C. come out of boredom

D. come without knowing what they will see

3. According to the passage, which of the following best describes Niagara Falls?

A. Niagara Falls consists of two rivers, one Canadian and the other American.

B. American Falls is considerably higher than Horseshoe Falls.

C. The Niagara River has two Falls, one in Canada and one in the United States.

D. Although the Niagara Rivers flows through the United States and Canada, the Falls are only in the United States.

4. A "steamer" in line 8 is probably

A. a bus

B. a boat

C. a walkway

D. a park

5. The expression "right up" in line 8 could best be replaced by

A. turn to the right

B. follow correct procedures

C. travel upstream

D. all the way up

6. The passage implies that tourists prefer to

A. visit Niagara Falls during warmer weather

B. see the Falls from a great distance

C. take a ride over the Falls

D. come to the Niagara Falls for a winter vacation

7. According to the passage, why was Niagara park created?

A. To encourage tourists to visit Niagara Falls

B. To show off the nature beauty of Niagara Falls

C. To protect the area around Niagara Falls

D. To force Canada to open Queen Victoria Park

8. The word "jurisdiction" in line 17 is closest meaning to

A. view

B. assistance

C. taxation

D. control

9. The word "pristine" in line 18 is closest in meaning to

A. pure and natural

B. highly developed

C. well-regulated

D. overused

10. The paragraph following the passage most probably discusses

A. additional ways to observe the falls

B. steps take by government agencies to protect the falls

C. a detailed description of the division of the falls between the United States and Canada

D. further problems that are destroying the area around the falls

APPENDIX B. (TOEFL PROFICIENCY TEST)

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COMPLETE TEST FIVE

SECTION 1
LISTENING COMPREHENSION
Time—approximately 35 minutes
(including the reading of the directions for each part)

In this section of the test, you will have an opportunity to demonstrate your ability to understand conversations and talks in English. There are three parts to this section, with special directions for each part. Answer all the questions on the basis of what is **stated** or **implied** by the speakers you hear. Do **not** take notes or write in your test book at any time. Do **not** turn the pages until you are told to do so.

Part A

Directions: In Part A you will hear short conversations between two people. After each conversation, you will hear a question about the conversation. The conversations and questions will not be repeated. After you hear a question, read the four possible answers in your test book and choose the best answer. Then, on your answer sheet, find the number of the question and fill in the space that corresponds to the letter of the answer you have chosen.

Listen to an example.   **Sample Answer**

                                                                                          Ⓐ
On the recording, you will hear: Ⓑ
                                                                                          Ⓒ
(man)   *That exam was just awful.*   ●
(woman)   *Oh, it could have been worse.*
(narrator) *What does the woman mean?*

In your test book, you will read: (A) The exam was really awful.
                                        (B) It was the worst exam she had ever seen.
                                        (C) It couldn't have been more difficult.
                                        (D) It wasn't that hard.

You learn from the conversation that the man thought the exam was very difficult and that the woman disagreed with the man. The best answer to the question, "What does the woman mean?" is (D), "It wasn't that hard." Therefore, the correct choice is (D).

(Wait)

2 • 2 • 2 • 2 • 2 • 2 • 2 • 2 • 2

SECTION 2
STRUCTURE AND WRITTEN EXPRESSION
Time—25 minutes
(including the reading of the directions)
Now set your clock for 25 minutes.

This section is designed to measure your ability to recognize language that is appropriate for standard written English. There are two types of questions in this section, with special directions for each type.

Structure

Directions: These questions are incomplete sentences. Beneath each sentence you will see four words or phrases, marked (A), (B), (C), and (D). Choose the **one** word or phrase that best completes the sentence. Then, on your answer sheet, find the number of the question and fill in the space that corresponds to the letter of the answer you have chosen.

Look at the following examples.

Example I   **Sample Answer**

The president _____ the election by a landslide.   ●
                                                                                 Ⓑ
(A) won   Ⓒ
(B) he won   Ⓓ
(C) yesterday
(D) fortunately

The sentence should read, "The president won the election by a landslide." Therefore, you should choose answer (A).

Example II   **Sample Answer**

When _____ the conference?   Ⓐ
                                                                                 ●
(A) the doctor attended   Ⓒ
(B) did the doctor attend   Ⓓ
(C) the doctor will attend
(D) the doctor's attendance

The sentence should read, "When did the doctor attend the conference?" Therefore, you should choose answer (B).

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SECTION 3
READING COMPREHENSION
Time—55 minutes
(including the reading of the directions)
Now set your clock for 55 minutes.

This section is designed to measure your ability to read and understand short passages similar in topic and style to those that students are likely to encounter in North American universities and colleges. This section contains reading passages and questions about the passages.

Directions: In this section you will read several passages. Each one is followed by a number of questions about it. You are to choose the **one** best answer, (A), (B), (C), or (D), to each question. Then, on your answer sheet, find the number of the question and fill in the space that corresponds to the letter of the answer you have chosen.

Answer all questions about the information in a passage on the basis of what is **stated** or **implied** in that passage.

Read the following passage:

John Quincy Adams, who served as the sixth president of the United States from 1825 to 1829, is today recognized for his masterful statesmanship and diplomacy. He dedicated his life to public service, both in the presidency and in the various other political offices that he
Line held. Throughout his political career he demonstrated his unswerving belief in freedom of
(5) speech, the antislavery cause, and the right of Americans to be free from European and Asian domination.

Example I   **Sample Answer**

To what did John Quincy Adams devote his life?

(A) Improving his personal life
(B) Serving the public
(C) Increasing his fortune
(D) Working on his private business

According to the passage, John Quincy Adams "dedicated his life to public service." Therefore, you should choose answer (B).

Example II   **Sample Answer**

In line 4, the word "unswerving" is closest in meaning to

(A) moveable
(B) insignificant
(C) unchanging
(D) diplomatic

The passage states that John Quincy Adams demonstrated his unswerving belief "throughout his career." This implies that the belief did not change. Therefore, you should choose answer (C).

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