

An Emphasis on Reading Skill Using Pareto Principle

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Abstract : This paper is an attempt to enhance the necessity of incorporating reading skill as reading is the building blocks of life. "The more you read the more things you know. The more that you learn the more places you'll go." Dr. Seuss. Reading is a complex communicative process of receiving and interpreting the written word. So, the present study has undertaken the Pareto Principle (80/20 rule), which provides solution for the difficulties in developing reading skill through activities.

IndexTerms - Reading skill, Pareto Principle, Activities, Reading difficulties

INTRODUCTION

Reading is a function of today's world. Smith (1973) is proved by his line: "Reading is an act of communication in which information is transferred from a transmitter to a receiver". The word "read" means: understand the meaning of written or printed words or symbols (Oxford South African Dictionary). Reading is an interactive process between the reader and the writer. Brunan W.K (1989) for instance defines reading as a two way interaction in which information is exchange between the reader and the author". According to Stallfiter (1969), teachers define reading as: "a complicated procedure. Readers read to get information from the printed pages. They should be able to pronounce and comprehend the printed words, signs, letters, and symbols by assigning meaning to them." According to Mariam (1991) she proposed that a major avenue of learning is through reading. Yet, if we do not understand what we are reading, we cannot learn or remember it. Comprehending is a major concerned, then, of all teachers who use printed material in the classroom. Reading is the process of constructing meaning through the dynamic interaction among: (1) the reader's existing knowledge; (2) the information suggested by the text being read; and (3) the context of the reading situation (Wixson, Peters, Weber, & Roeber, 1987, citing the new definition of reading for Michigan). Reading is the process of constructing meaning from written texts. It is a complex skill requiring the coordination of a number of interrelated sources of information (Anderson et al., 1985). The new Literacy Dictionary (Harris & Hodges, 1995) defines both word recognition and word identification as "the process of determining the pronunciation and some degree of meaning of an unknown word" (pp. 282-283). If the reader doesn't know the vocabulary, the word-identification skill allows access to the word pronunciation but not its meaning. So the reader is unable to attach meaning to the word where, he or she has not read the word.

In reading the text, the ability to decode or identify and pronounce words is self-evidently important, but knowing what the words mean plays a major role. The students with a smaller vocabulary comprehend less of what they read.

To overcome the difficulties of reading, Pareto Principle is used in this study. The Pareto principle believes that the more frequently something happens, the more impact it has on outcome.

The common Problems in Developing Reading Skill:

Reading is an important tool in acquiring a second language; a great effort has to put in to develop reading skill. Although there exist many ways in promoting reading skill among students, still it is something that seems problematic. The problems occur because according to Noormah (2000) the students are lacking of vocabulary, hardly understand the words and less interest to English subject. Besides that, there are also several factors contributing to the diffident of this particular skill. Based on Sivaguru (2000) those factors are home, school and social environment. There are instances when teachers have a complaint about students, saying that 'student's in studies is declining, 'they don't read', 'instead of reading they just waste their time', they easily forget everything'. There can be other reasons for it, but one set of reading related problems, which can be the base of the above-mentioned problems are:

- Vocabulary – The number of unfamiliar words.
- Students are not properly motivated, taught and guided to develop interest in reading and thereby they fail to realize and acquire the essential basic reading skills.
- Systematic study techniques are not learnt and followed.
- Issues with de-coding
- Poor comprehension skill
- Struggles with reading aloud
- Trouble in keeping track of time

- Difficulty in recalling facts and numbers

Pareto Principle (80/20 Rule):

The Pareto principle, also known as the 80/20 rule, is a theory that maintains 80 percent of the output from a given situation or system is determined by 20 percent of the input. It is named after economist Vilfredo Pareto, states that there exists an inverse relationship to input and output. The principle can be interpreted in a way that a minority of inputs results in the majority of outputs. The Pareto Principle is an observation, not a law of nature. This 80/20 rule permeates time management. . So the value of focusing on the top 20 percent of the activities (the high value) generates, the powerful results. The objective of this principle is to find what is vital, ignore what is trivial, and to maximize results.

Here are few examples of the Pareto principle in action:

- 20 percent of employees produce 80 percent of a company's results.
- 20 percent of a given employee's time yields 80 percent of their output.
- 20 percent of software bugs cause 80 percent of the software's failures.
- 20 percent of a company's investments produce 80 percent of its investment profits.

Applying the 80/20 Rule to Teaching:

The teachers are working as hard as possible to teach and educate students but then not getting the results. Its high time to reconsider the approach to work and time. Apart from being applied to economics, the Pareto Principle can be applied to any endeavour—from your work to your personal life. As this study is on developing reading habit, the teacher has to identify the tasks to develop the reading habit that will have the biggest impact on students' reaching the goal. The teacher has to separate what he /she have to do from what is truly valuable and impactful. There are few actions which really stand out, like planning instruction, studying assessment result etc. For developing reading habit, the teacher has to plan activity for each day. The teacher has to spend his/her mental energy on analysing assessment results and strategically planning instruction that will help them to meet the students' need. By implementing this principle, the teacher feels focussed and accomplished rather than spinning the wheels. Moreover, the teacher feels the experience of moving ahead.

The 80/20 Rule: Maximize the Potential in Less Time

“The majority of the effects come from the minority of causes”

All English teachers want the students to become critical readers and thoughtful writers. The methods to achieve this goal are varied and plentiful. Here is an example that dominates the focus of this study.

80/20 for the Classroom: 20% of Content = 80% of Impact!

Action Plan: Prepare 20% of content—then let your creativity and passion take over the rest. 20% of the content which the teacher has to teach will account for 80% of the impact on students' grades and understanding. This can be observed on conducting activities and standardized tests. With this idea, here are some small changes that might have a big impact.

The two major problems identified in this study for developing reading skill are lack of vocabulary and interest. If these two problems are rectified naturally, the other obstacles for developing reading skill will be solved.

Problem solving methodology - Pareto principle.

Less time

+ = 20%

Easy activities

Creating interest in reading

Increasing reading speed

Involving in team work = 80%

Developing four kinds of reading comprehension-

Literal, Inferential, Critical, Creative.

Integrating other skills-speaking, writing, role play, group discussion.

Vocabulary activities:

The following activities are conducted regularly to make the students familiarize with the vocabulary which helps in developing reading skill.

- Previewing in context
- Self-collection
- Language families
- Prefix, Suffix, Root Study
- Word Sleuthing
- Word Contest
- Psycholinguistic guessing game.
- Reviewing vocabulary word card:
- once

Reading Activities:

1. Positive principle:

The teacher starts out the class orientation by giving the students the three principles of reading.

Acquainting with reading:

Procedure:

Make a copy of questionnaire for each student.

Distribute the questionnaire and explain the questions if necessary.

Assure the students that there are no right or wrong answers.

In next class the students share their answers. Discussions may last for 15 minutes.

2. Motivating and supporting reading:

These activities encourage students to read by providing support, inspiration and incentives.

3. Collaborative reading:

- The teacher or one of the students read the story aloud while showing them the pictures and the words on each page.
- The learners are asked to predict what will happen next.
- They are encouraged to comment on the story.

4. Book review in pair:

Students are informed to read a book on their own choice at home. In the next class they are given the review form to fill. Then they should share their review in pairs.

By implementing such technique, the teacher can dramatically enhance the habit of reading among the students' community. This process takes time and the teacher has to keep track of it over the course of time. This gives more room for the teachers to come out with their creativity and passion to cover the 20% of the content that goes to the 80% victories. If we use the 80/20 Principle, we can witness the growth in efficiency, energy, and success. Using this hidden tool of Pareto's 80/20 Principle, the teaching learning process becomes much easier and more efficient.

Conclusion:

Pareto's Principle or the 80/20 Rule is a useful construct in developing reading skill which allows increasing intelligence, becomes more creative, accesses inexpensive entertainment, and finds a way to reduce stress. Just a small number of tasks account for the majority of progress. In order to accomplish success one needs to have good reading and comprehension skills. Without these skills children will struggle to grow academically as reading is the foundation to all academic subjects such as History, Mathematics and Science and also influences the child's ability to write.

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