



MODULE Comprehension Strategies Using Texts

LEARNING OBJECTIVES:

- Sensitising subject teachers to comprehension strategies using authentic texts
- Allowing participants to assume the role of pupils
- Enabling participants to understand how the content of an unknown foreign language text can be accessed

DURATION:

1 Hour 30 Minutes

MATERIALS:

- Extract from "Le Monde de l'éducation" dated December 1999: [„Die Ausländer in einer Provinzstadt: Bergerac“](#)
- Information sheet: [“Verstehensstrategien“](#)

PROCEDURE:

Participants receive the following instructions:

Phase One

- Read the text silently and try to underline all elements which you understand.
- Underline, in a different colour, further elements which are not fully beyond comprehension.
- Develop hypotheses – based on what you have underlined – about the content of the text.
- How will you now proceed in order to confirm or refute these hypotheses?
- Will you have to resort to further research on the text in question (in other texts, specialist books etc)? A bilingual dictionary is not available.

Phase Two

- Compare your results with your colleague's suggestions
- If there are discrepancies, try to find out why and summarise your findings
- Then make a note of the range of problems associated with the text (a synthesis of the various suggestions)
- Think about what happens in the process of comprehension. What back-up did you need to understand the text?
- What prevented you understanding the text?
- Which strategies would you suggest to help a reader acquire understanding of an unknown foreign-language text?
- Now differentiate between global comprehension and detailed understanding of a text: Is detailed understanding always necessary?
- How do you go from global to detailed understanding of a text?
- Think about what significance is given to decoding the text material in bilingual teaching.
- Reflect upon what significance is given to linguistic comprehension in bilingual teaching. This reflection also applies to the evaluation of video materials.

The participants work in accordance with the instructions given. The findings are pooled and discussed in a plenary session.



COMMENTARY:

This procedure developed for training comprehension can certainly be used for different types of text, but is most suitable for extracts from newspapers or magazines, for such text-based materials contain more decoded structures and terms (company names, words borrowed from English, names of countries, titles of politicians etc) than, for example, literary texts.

We could thoroughly recommend this procedure to teachers of various subjects, in particular language teachers, especially in so far as it activates prior knowledge and motivates them to consolidate their understanding of the text. It thus represents a source of motivation. After all, pupils become aware of how important it is to learn to differentiate between essentials and non-essentials in comprehension.