



MODULE

Reading Strategies for Subject-Specific Texts

LEARNING OBJECTIVES:

- Encouraging the meaningful use of the target language through fun and motivating activities
- Introducing and applying reading comprehension strategies for the CLIL classroom
- Selecting, using and applying active learning strategies

METHOD:

Modelling classroom activities and practice

DURATION:

Approx. 2 hours 30 minutes

MATERIALS:

- Worksheets
- Visual support

PROCEDURE:

1. Relating the topic area to the participants' own experience (*How many houses have you lived in?*)

The participants ask each other the above question ([AB1](#)) and form a line. The person who has lived in the most houses at one end, the one who has lived in the fewest houses at the other. The tutor needs to demonstrate the activity first, perhaps with a couple of volunteers. Simple communication (in the target language/L2) is established straightaway and it is fun. It also raises the question "Who is a migrant?" and thus serves as an introduction to the topic.

2. Icebreaker on Migration (*Find someone who...*)

This is another warming up, milling activity that focuses on the participants' own experience of different aspects of migration and makes the point that we are all migrants in some way. Participants have to fill in a sheet by asking each other questions ([AB2a](#) and [AB2b](#)). The rules of the activity are: 1. they have to collect nine different names of people who say "yes" 2. they are only allowed to speak to one person at a time. The questions are also on the OHP during the activity as visual support.

3. A geographical discussion in small groups (*Icebreaker Odd One Out*)

The participants are divided into groups of 3-4 and given a sheet containing a grid ([AB3a](#) and [AB3b](#)) with the numbered names of 24 countries. The tutor selects four random numbers and asks the groups to discuss which one is the odd one out. Afterwards each group has to justify their choice.

Linguistically, this is a much more open activity, but an overhead transparency with discussion vocabulary as a visual support could be useful. Again, participants are talking about things they know, using language they know.

4. Visual stimulus: Picture of refugee ship with a lot of people on board

We now proceed to working on the topic itself. The tutor puts a [picture](#) on the OHP and waits for the group to react. He/she writes words on the board. The picture is a stimulus for

obtaining both language and reaction to the content from the group. The students' comments can be used to formulate questions that can be dealt with later.

5. Working with definitions and topic-specific vocabulary (Migration)

The group participants have to match definitions ([AB4a](#) and [AB4b](#)) to different kinds of migrant. This serves as a form of linguistic preparation and also allows the group to explore the concept of "migrant" on a deeper level. It could be used to encourage dictionary work and ensures that all members of the group are using terminology in the same way. This is especially important in a topic such as migration where certain terms can have emotive connotations or alternative "populist" definitions.

6. Different steps for making texts accessible. (Jigsaw Reading)

The participants are divided into groups of 4 and each member of the group receives a different part of the same text ([AB5](#)).

The activity can be divided into several phases:

Individual work:

Warming up the text: here the participants are given simple underlining tasks ([AB6a](#) and [AB6b](#)) that help them focus on what they know and also make them read and re-read their text several times. They are asked to invent a title for their text based on skim reading.

Unlocking the text: here the participants fill in a grid (that can be used for any text/video) with key words. They begin to engage more closely with the content and are reading for more detail.

Unlocking the detail: This is achieved by using two techniques: (a) True or False statements. Participants have to write true or false beside each sentence and (b) Questions on the text. Participants underline the answers in their text. The purpose of this is to save time and to postpone a longer writing activity, (which could upset the pace of the lesson) perhaps setting it as homework.





Group work:

Speaking: (a) Each participant asks another person in his/her group the questions that relate to his/her text and jots down the answers in note form.* The group members rotate until each person has the answers to all the questions. It is important to use strategies to keep the students in the target language ([AB7](#)). It is equally important to provide them with the language they need to discuss.

(b) Each group now has to identify four main points relating to the entire text and present these in the plenary.

Writing: Either individually as homework or as a whole group, the participants write a summary of the text of between 50 to 60 words. This summary should contain a deliberate content mistake. Following correction of this work by the teacher and the student, the texts are put on the wall in a later session and the participants go around the room identifying the content mistakes. The aim of this activity is to provide a written activity with a purpose and an audience. It also provides an additional reading activity that serves to revise content and language at the beginning of a subsequent session.

7. Unpicking these activities in the plenary

The participants have the opportunity to reflect on the activities that have been undertaken and consider how they could use them in their own teaching.

COMMENTARY:

This module deals very much with classroom practice and the experience of the learners. It offers a range of different strategies for making texts accessible and shows how these can be used to support bilingual teaching. The final unpicking stage is an integral component of the work when undertaken by teachers. It allows discussion and elaboration of the activities and their worth and enables the tutor to address misconceptions about the techniques used. It facilitates understanding of how the activities allow progression through the topic and calls for reflection and evaluation by the participants in order to ensure a deeper level of understanding.

* Depending on the level of the students and the difficulty of the text, a checking stage could be useful here. All those in the room with the same text form groups to discuss and check their answers.