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Understanding of what is read and communicating with a text in class teaching

Abstract

Teaching students starts when they master the reading technique. Mechanical reading allows the student to distinguish words and connects them into a sentence and, at the same time, to practice recognizing letters. This process does not end here. In order to perfect it is necessary that students understand all that they read, they should know what they have read and they should also think about it.

The texts used in class depend on the student's level of education. The teacher is the one who is required to provide various ways for the student to understand the written text, to use methods, models, techniques and different types of innovations in order to bring the text to the level easiest to be understood by the students. To understand a text you need to know how to communicate with it. This means you should get the student to be interested the text. The way the student will be interested in the given text is the way in which the text will be understood.

In this paper we try to present ways of reading with understanding and types of communicating with a text, one of the basic steps that are used to make the reading process complete, as well as the definition of certain terms mentioned in the paper to clarify some doubts or matches when defining these in teaching. Clarifying the relationship between the teacher, the student and the text as a central component in this triangle is very important for completing the process of reading in elementary school.

Key words: teaching, communication, text, reading, understanding.

Reading with understanding

The understanding of a text in teaching is based on its reading and experiencing. One of the tasks of Macedonian language refers to the training of students for independent experiencing, understanding and appreciation of a literary work of art belonging to a variety of genres.

The interpretation of a literary work in the triangle text-teaching- student involves several levels of reviewing in teaching literature: objectives and tasks of teaching, program content, interpretive models, textbooks, teacher characteristics and cognitive and experiencing capabilities of the student.

The aim of teaching the Macedonian language is that the learners master the basic rules of the language in which they will orally and in writing properly express themselves, to learn and experience it, and to be able to understand certain literary works. In study program for the third and fourth grade for Macedonian students are introduced more deeply into the process of reading and understanding what has been read. During interpretation of a given text analytical and synthetic methods are used to a greater extent, and the interpretation should be imbued with problem solving issues arising from the text, and experiences through which the student will start observing, discovering, investigating, evaluating, and coming to conclusions. In this manner students' curiosity, conscious activity and exploring are stimulated.

Understanding of the text is a condition in which cognitive, emotional and motivational factors operate.¹ An eye is kept on certain objects or situations that are based on historical experience. In this way a unique perception is formed which Kant marks by the term "unique experience".² This true, special, unrepeatable something that a text can provide can only be accomplished in close interaction between the individual and the written text.

Understanding of what is read has different meanings related to the understanding of causation and identifying of the problem, and is defined as perceiving, designing, connecting new information or new content with the one already learned. In determining understanding the inclusion of the new and unknown is emphasized in the area of the old and familiar, i.e. linking new information with previously acquired, understanding the essence and various functional connections and relationships. *"This connection may consist of different cognitive operations: classification (new information is classified in some learnt information), analogy (new information is similar to some previous information), storage of new information in a sequence"*.³

¹ Пуриќ, Д.,(2006): *Унапређивање квалитета читања код ученика школског узраста*, Ужице, стр.401-402.

² Hewes, D. E. (1995): *The Cognitive Bases of Interpersonal Communication*, Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, pp. 183-222.

³ Педагошка енциклопедија, (1989),стр.297.

Understanding is often equated with comprehension, i.e., "*Comprehension is sometimes determined as a result of cognition, but it is not the ultimate objective in teaching, but a prerequisite for practical application.*"⁴

Understanding of what is read as well as oral conveying is based on detection and active processing of purposeful information.⁵ The study of the process of understanding is followed by the path beginning from a formed oral communication and leading to an understanding of its content through the general idea contained in the text, and, in the end, to the motive that lies at its base. The process of understanding is possible under three conditions. Firstly the receiver needs to know how to perceive and understand a certain word-lexical unit of speech. The phonetic structure and meaning of the word is the basic material of the process of decoding the statement. In addition, we need to understand the structure of the sentence, or to discover the meaning of the words that allow formulating of certain thoughts. Finally, as some sentences that are elementary expressions become clear, the process of decoding turns into its last stage - understanding of what is communicated. As the meaning of the sentence is not equal to the sum of the meaning of certain words thus the meaning of the statement is not exhausted by the meanings of individual sentences. To fully understand what is communicated, the recipient must choose the sentences with critical meaning and formulate the general idea of the statement, and then decipher the motive of the statement which constitutes the subtext.

To reach this meaning, it is necessary to walk a long and complex cognitive way, which forms and transforms the reader himself. The reader's searching for meaning symbolizes perseverance and patience to "shaping and spiritual journey" of a literary text in "its repeating and metamorphosis" in order to examine and investigate until "average convergence" appears, a hearth from where the whole structure and meaning radiate, and which Clodel⁶ calls a "dynamic pattern".

To achieve the goal of teaching literature related to understanding during reading a literary text, by means of analysis of the surface should be bypassed and through the inner subtext general sense should be reached, all the way to the motive which is hidden in the behavior of the characters in the text.

⁴ Енциклопедиски речник по педагогија, 1963.

⁵ Пуриќ, Д. (2006): *Унапређивање квалитета читања код ученика школског узраста*, Ужице, стр.405-407.

⁶ Meyers, C. (1988): *Teaching students to think critically*, Jossey bass San Francisko, p.38.

In scientific and professional understanding of a literary-artistic text the application of a logical whole and research techniques is perceived. The elements of the structure of a text are analyzed, and the meaning and implication are synthesized. Understanding represents an attempt to get closer to the value of the work, an effort to find ultimate truth. Through meaningful learning students are trained for independent judgment about the value of the text. If we put this into a broader context, the opinion of literature from a teacher's view can be transformed into student opinion of life in general. Programatic understanding of literary texts in teaching literature does not concretely describe the notion of understanding. The literature available to teachers treats this complex problem from different perspectives (philosophical, psychological, literary-theoretical, and methodical). It is emphasized that there are no fixed, universal and general methodological and methodical understanding systems applicable to every literary text alike.

Experience and understanding of a literary text as a goal of teaching literature is made operational at several levels, each of which is divergent and none is final. Literary text is like a living organism, not just an object of study, and it represents a constant challenge to the interpreter. In the interpretative model in teaching literature a sense of a literary text is formed in the consciousness of the student.

Communication with the text

Communication with the text can be very different and therefore we say that there may be:

- Passive communication – it occurs in all cases where an individual shows no interest in a given text;

- Active Communication - marks the individual as an active category. There may exist certain phases: identification, reproduction, critical review of the data provided, and the realization phase. It means that this communication will be differentiated and individualized.

- Success in the interpretation of a text will depend largely on the manner of identification of recipients with the given data, when the emotional sphere of this identification is especially important.⁷

- Associative identification means taking over the roles from the text, i.e. the recipient is identified by its resemblance to a character from the text, or the recipient empathizes with

⁷ Stevanovic, M. (2003), *Didaktika*, Digital point, Rijeka, str.264-265.

the events and situations he/she meets while reading the text. He/she takes these as his/her own and stands up in their defense when opposing views are presented.

- Admiring identification points to a recipient who admires the given data. It has an affective character. This type of identification should be used for greater influence on the rational plan so that the processed text could be experienced more successfully.

- Sympathetic identification has particular value. The recipient will feel satisfied as he/she gets to know (learn) a new thing (text). The recipient accepts it, but at the same time is ready to penetrate deeper into it in order to get more information. Then the student is inclined towards a practical transformation of the data.

In communication with the text symbolic and non-symbolic communication as well as diachronic and synchronic are also important.⁸ Symbolic communication represents contact with certain symbols (letters) and other marks in the text, or the understanding of given words, sentences, paragraphs, and larger parts and wholes. The facts are taken as they are. Non-symbolic communication means discovering the connection and relationship not only among the given, but also between the hidden and the less visible data. This represents going deeper into different layers of artistic, scientific and professional structure of the text. Diachronic communication denotes the connection of the new text with the old one (previously interpreted). In certain teaching subjects (mathematics and foreign language) this type of communication is very important, as the new material is a follow up to the previous one, i.e. students cannot learn something new, if they are not well familiar with the previously learnt. This communication actually means chronological following of certain phenomena. It represents the connection of various conditions and transformations, i.e. meeting with the material through the prism of the present and the past. Synchronic communication refers to the heterogeneous versatility, i.e. the interdisciplinary observation - connecting new facts from one area with the related one from another area. This can be called horizontal communication, unlike diachronic which can be labeled as vertical communication. In synchronic communication there is divergent thinking which allows the formation of new connections and relationships between certain data.⁹

⁸ Според: Stevanovic, M. (2003): *Didaktika*, Digital point, Rijeka. стр.275.

⁹ Cvetanovic, V., (2000): *Osnove kulture govora I retorike*, Beograd, Topi, стр.28.

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