

Assignment One

Part One

The four macro skills of English are *Reading, Writing, Listening and Speaking*. These four skills can be put into two different groups. The first group is the *receptive skills* which comprise of Listening and Reading. That is, these skills activate the receptive part of the brain, the part which is responsible for receiving, processing and understanding language. The second group is the productive skills which as the name suggests activates the productive part of the brain, the part which is responsible for taking a notation, encoding it and expressing it in a way so that others can understand it. The two productive skills are of course Writing and Speaking. Each of the four macro skills have further sub-skills (which are known as micro-skills).

Reading

Reading is a (receptive) skill which does not come naturally even in the students' L1, that is, reading is something that has to be taught in a formal setting. Reading is a skill that students typically can have at a higher level than the other three skills. The main reason for this is that reading is not subjected to a time constraint. That is, if students were reading a newspaper article, a book, a website, etc, they have all the time they like to figure out what any unknown words mean and to even look words up in the dictionary. Thus making reading somewhat more accessible to lower levels. One drawback of reading is that that written words are toneless (and sometimes without accompanying visuals) consequentially this means students are relying on contextual words to help figure out new meaning. And so at very low levels (like A1) the reading material must make good use of visuals.

What is vital for teaching a reading class is that the reading has a sufficient number of context clues, such as, pictures or headlines. Any new vocab in the reading exercise should be pre-taught. It is also important that the reading is done in stages, that is, a skim or scan exercise first then followed with a further reading. A teacher should never have students do a reading cold.

Writing

Writing is a productive skill which just like reading need not happen in real time and as such students are free to take as long as they desire in writing a text. For example, writing an email can be written then rewritten until the students feel their meaning has been put into their writing. Again writing just like reading does not come naturally, even in the L1, and as such requires a lot of formal education to acquire writing skills. Also, like reading, writing takes many different forms, both *formal and informal*. A further complicating factor to developing writing skills is the ever changing medium in which writing takes place. For example, 20 years ago it would be perfectly reasonable to teach students how to compose a formal letter, however, nowadays it is no longer a necessary skills (but useful one none the less). Take for