

## 21<sup>st</sup> Century Skills in ELT



29th Annual APPI Conference: 2015: ISCTE: Lisboa

# **Reading Skills in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. What reading was, is and should be in the ELT classroom.**

**Nicolas Hurst,**

*The Department of Anglo-American Studies,  
The Faculty of Letters, The University of Porto.*



# Reading Test.

i cdnuolt blveiee taht I cluod aulacly uesdnatnrd waht I was rdanieg. The phaonmneal pweor of the hmuan mnid, aoccdrnig to a rscheearch at Cmabrigde Uinervtisy, it dseno't mtaetr in waht oerdr the ltteres in a wrod are, the olny iproamtnt tihng is taht the frsit and lsat ltteer be in the rghit pclae. The rset can be a taotl mses and you can sitll raed it whotuit a pboerlm. Tihs is bcuseae the huamn mnid deos not raed ervey lteter by istlef, but the wrod as a wlohe.

# Theories of Reading [5]

- Traditional: reading as a hierarchically ordered process: bottom up de-coding of symbols, words, structures etc to construct meaning: to enable comprehension
- Cognitive: a guessing game: series of knowledge based hypotheses employed and/or tested in order to construct meaning through a top-down process
- Metacognitive: readers employ strategies to interpret, classify, sequence, order etc information to construct meaning

- Schema theory: past experiences lead to the creation of mental frameworks that help a reader make sense of new texts (content & formal schemata)
- Reader response theory: importance of the reader/receiver: individual unique meanings created through 'transaction' with the text: personal & subjective interpretation
- ...

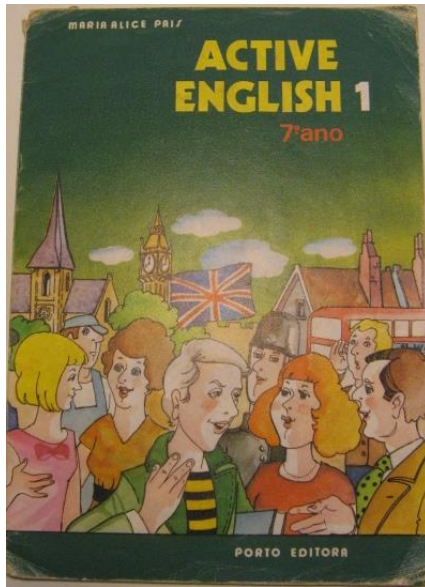
# Approaches to Reading in ELT

Generally accepted pedagogic framework:

- **pre**-reading tasks: activate existing knowledge of topic, predict & speculate about text content, etc
- **while** reading tasks: interact with text, answer factual questions (T/F q.s), focus on lexis, build opinions, etc
- **post**-reading tasks: check interpretations, responses, alignment with author's intention, etc

# Coursebooks in Doctoral Research

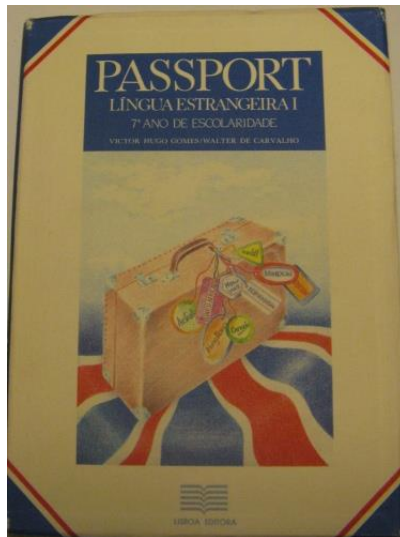
1981



1998



1991



2004



# Three-way analysis of texts for reading

- Text **genre**: form of the text

i.e. letters, articles, adverts brochures, literary extracts etc (see Rivas, 1999)

- Text **type**: function of the text

i.e. narrative, descriptive, argumentative, instructive, expository (see Bloor, 1998 & Jones, 2002)

- Text **topic**: socio-cultural category of the text

i.e. identity, beliefs, behaviour, icons, geography (see Stern, 1992 & Byram, 1993)

# Data collection (i)

<b>Aerial: 7<sup>th</sup> grade: texts for reading</b>					
<i>Unit. page</i>	<i>Length +/- words</i>	<i>Topic in book</i>	<i>Soc-Cultural Category</i>	<i>Type of text: Function</i>	<i>Form of Text: Genre</i>
1.6	130	Back to school	c) Behaviour	Descriptive	Class text
3.12	150	Monday morning	c) Behaviour	Descriptive	Class text
4.14	140	Weekend away	c) Behaviour	Descriptive	Class text
6.20	120	Part-time job	c) Behaviour	Descriptive	Class text
7.26	330 ÷ 3	Where people live	c) Behaviour	Descriptive	Class text
9.32	300 ÷ 2	My room (f + m)	c) Behaviour	Descriptive	Class text
10.34	290 ÷ 4	My life (4 teens)	c) Behaviour	Descriptive	Class text
11.38	140	New school	c) Behaviour	Descriptive	Letter
12.40	40	New school term	d) Institutions	Expository	Timetable
13.44	230 ÷ 4	Qualifications	b) Beliefs	Argumentative	Opinions
14.46	105	Relaxing at school	c) Behaviour	Descriptive	Class text
15.50	170	A. Schwarzenegger	a) Identity	Narrative	Bio piece
18.58	225	New York	f) Geography	Descriptive	Class text
20.68	220	Karaoke	c) Behaviour	Descriptive	Class text
21.72	100	Beach pollution	c) Behaviour	Descriptive	Class text
22.74	150	School sports match	c) Behaviour	Descriptive	Class text
23.78	250	School sports day	c) Behaviour	Descriptive	Letter
24.80	225	School dance/Prom	c) Behaviour	Descriptive	Class text

# Data collection (ii)

<b>Aerial English : 7th grade: texts for reading: Total = 18</b>					
<i>Content of Text: Soc-Cultural</i>		<i>Type of Text: Function</i>		<i>Form of Text: Genre</i>	
Identity	5.6% (1)	Narrative	5.6% (1)	Class Text	72.2% (13)
Beliefs	5.6% (1)	Descriptive	83.3% (15)	Letter	11.1% (2)
Behaviour	77.8% (14)	Argumentative	5.6% (1)	Bio piece	5.6% (1)
Institutions	5.6% (1)	Instructive	0.0% (0)	Timetable	5.6% (1)
Icons	0.0% (0)	Expository	5.6% (1)	Opinions	5.6% (1)
Geography	5.6% (1)				

# Overall results: historically

<b>Coursebook Series: Texts for reading</b>						
<b>Coursebook Series</b>	<b>Content of texts</b>		<b>Type of Texts</b>		<b>Form of texts</b>	
<i>Active English</i> (36 texts) 1981	Behaviour	77.8%	Descriptive	61.1%	Class texts	33.3%
	Geography	13.9%	Narrative	22.2%	Letters	33.3%
<i>Passport</i> (111 texts) 1991	Behaviour	46.8%	Descriptive	44.1%	Class texts	47.7%
	Geography	21.6%	Expository	37.8%	Leaflets	7.2%
<i>Aerial</i> (68 texts) 1998	Behaviour	67.7%	Descriptive	69.1%	Class texts	67.6%
	Geography	13.2%	Narrative	13.2%	Letters	11.8%
<i>Extreme</i> (85 texts) 2004	Behaviour	65.9%	Descriptive	62.4%	Class texts	42.4%
	Identity	10.6%	Expository	17.6%	Quiz	11.8%

# What do learners have to do with texts ... reading??

- Ss have to find information, especially the target culture: social, political or historical background to the text. The meaning of the text is seen as a cultural product.
- Ss have to pay attention to the language of the text (grammar, vocab, style etc) to help them make the correct interpretation of the meaning of the text.

# Spotlight (2010) 7th grade: pp70-1

**READING SPOT**

Lancaster is a small city in the northwest of England. Read a description of the city and its surroundings



- The centre of Lancaster is often jammed. If you use your car at rush hour, you have to be very patient. At five o'clock, I see Greyhound Bridge packed full of cars, buses vans and lorries. Drivers beep their horns but are usually quite patient with other drivers and pedestrians. People move around like busy little bees. When you walk near the traffic, the fumes choke you. The ambulance sounds its siren, but the traffic does not move.
- In Lancaster, in addition to the usual high street shops, there is a shopping arcade and a large indoor market which contains a fish market selling fresh fish from Morecambe Bay. Nearer Christmas, the shopping centre comes alive with music, lights and entertainment. There are also cinemas and theatres. In the theatre at Christmas, you can see pantomimes with the audience joining in with the live performers on stage.
- The history of Lancaster is all around and you can see it everywhere you look. If you walk along by the river Lune, you come to the old Custom House. Now it's called the Maritime Museum and in it you can learn about the history of boats, canals, the fishing industry and the slave trade.
- I grew up in the beautiful countryside near Lancaster. From my bedroom, I can see the rolling hills in the distance, but feel I could reach out and touch them. In my village everybody knows everybody else and everyone is always friendly. When people come to visit, they enjoy the peace and tranquillity of the area. I just don't like the pubs because people cram into them like sardines and the noise is dreadful.

**A. In which paragraph does Mary talk about:**

- the place where she lives;
- the slow traffic in Lancaster;
- an important old building;
- public facilities.

**B. Find evidence in the text for the sentences below.**

- Lancaster is a busy and noisy city.
- Busy people are compared to insects.

- The air is polluted in the centre of Lancaster.
- The shopping centre is decorated in December.
- Lancaster is a historical city.
- The people that live in the countryside are nice.

**C. Find in the 1st and 4th paragraphs words that mean the same as:**

- |                                |                            |
|--------------------------------|----------------------------|
| 1. filled with people and cars | 4. make you stop breathing |
| 2. busy part of the day        | 5. nice                    |
| 3. people walking in a street  | 6. terrible                |

**D. Pick out from the text the words related to the topic:**



**E. The text describes two places with different characteristics. Copy from the text expressions used to describe:**

the city of Lancaster	the countryside near Lancaster
- often jammed	- beautiful countryside

**F. Answer the following questions.**

- What kind of museum is the Maritime Museum?
- Why does everybody know everybody else in the countryside?
- Where would you prefer to live – in Lancaster or in the village where the author lives? Why?

**GRAMMAR SPOT**

**CONDITIONAL SENTENCES**

If you **use** your car during the rush hour, you **have to be** very patient.

You **have to be** very patient if you **use** your car during the rush hour.

If you **heat** water to 100°, it **boils**.

Water **boils** if you **heat** it to 100°.

Note: if = when

Type 0	If + Simple Present → , Simple Present or Simple Present → if + Simple Present
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If I **have** time today, I **will help** you with your homework.  
I **will help** you with your homework if I **have** time today.  
If I **go** to London, I **'ll visit** Buckingham Palace.  
I **'ll visit** Buckingham Palace if I **go** to London.

Type 1	If + Simple Present → , will ('ll) / will not (won't) + infinitive or will ('ll) / will not (won't) → if + Simple Present + infinitive
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Que tipo de frases condicionais exprime:  
- uma possibilidade real de algo acontecer?  
Tipo  
- uma verdade geral ou algo que acontece habitualmente? Tipo

Que alteração ocorre ao nível da pontuação quando não se começa a frase por if?

**A. ★**

**Match the two parts of the sentences.**

- |                               |                             |
|-------------------------------|-----------------------------|
| 1. If I practise my English,  | a. I keep it.               |
| 2. If you don't take a break, | b. if I see you tomorrow.   |
| 3. I'll buy you a drink       | c. it melts.                |
| 4. If I make a promise,       | d. if you don't water them. |
| 5. Your plants will die       | e. you'll feel very tired.  |
| 6. If you heat ice,           | f. it will get better.      |

**B. ★★**

**1. Put the verbs in brackets into the correct form.**

- If I \_\_\_\_\_ (find) your mobile, I'll give it back to you.
- My brother \_\_\_\_\_ (go) to Scotland next weekend if he can get a cheap flight.
- If my parents \_\_\_\_\_ (not/like) the hotel, they will come home sooner.
- The postcard \_\_\_\_\_ (not/arrive) tomorrow if you don't post it now.
- If you \_\_\_\_\_ (not/pay) the phone bill, you won't be able to make phone calls.

**2. What do the sentences above express? Possibility or true fact?**

# Problems with these approaches <sup>(3)</sup>...

- Too teacher-centred: the Ss have little or no control over the way they interact with the text as readers
- Too 'abstract': the Ss are not encouraged to make any personal connection with the text: to relate it to their own experiences
- Too limiting: assumes there is an inherent unique, correct meaning to the text that exists 'beyond' the reader

# We need to ... [12]

- provide a wide range/variety of texts in English: develop Ss' awareness of different styles, structures, purposes etc
- develop Ss' reading strategies through different tasks: reading for different purposes (and products)
- develop Ss' language awareness to improve to facilitate their reading ability
- develop Ss' critical stance with regard to text veracity or authenticity

- Move away from traditional 'literal' comprehension questions = low order word matching (recognition/recall)
- Be sure the Ss are given a choice of texts: Ss should read for themselves NOT for their teacher
- Provide texts relate to identified areas of Ss' interests (YAL genre?)
- Consciously link new information from the text to existing information the Ss already know

- Focus on ‘reading for meaning’: encourage individual responses to the text
- Emphasize the benefits of ‘extensive reading’ of longer (lit. based?) texts to balance the more traditional language focused ‘intensive reading’ of short texts.
- Provide follow-up activities that respect the Ss’ understanding and experience of the text: infer, evaluate & appreciate
- Engage the Ss cognitively, emotionally and strategically

# Concluding quote:

“ ... reading can be like a field trip to the zoo. At the zoo everyone notices different things. And upon returning everyone talks about what he or she saw. [...] a collective intelligence mindset creates understanding of what happened through information exchange, as students share their personal experiences, and, perhaps, too through deliberation or debate, as people offer potentially contradictory information.”

Jenkins et al (2013) p.188

# Basic Bibliography

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- Grabe, W. (2009) Reading in a Second Language. New York, C.U.P.
- Paran, A. (1996) Reading EFL: facts and fictions. *ELT Journal*, 50 (1): 25-34.
- Jenkins, H. et al (2013) Reading in a Participatory Culture. Berkeley, NWP

Thanks for being here...

**Please** contact me if you'd like to discuss any of the issues raised in this talk ...

My e-mail address is

[nrhurst@letras.up.pt](mailto:nrhurst@letras.up.pt)

