



CAPE Alumni Internet Connection: English Teacher Talk

CAPE Internet Talk was started as part of CAPE follow-up activities to continue ties with CAPE alumni and those who are interested in professional development in English teaching. It is hoped that this would increase our bond and aloha among former participants, and that the information in the TALK would help our alumni and friends/members review what they know and deepen their understanding of issues and interest in the ESL field.

Timed Repeated Skimming and Writing

Richard R. Day

Introduction

In this article, I present and discuss a writing activity, *timed repeated skimming and writing*, that I have my students do after they have finished reading a book in the extensive reading program. First I explain how to do the activity. Then I discuss its benefits.

The Activity

Timed repeated skimming and writing (TRSW) combines a variety of timed repeated reading with timed repeated writing. Instead of reading at a comfortable pace for overall understanding, students skim their books. Then they write about their books for a given period of time. The goals are to improve the skill of skimming, help them with getting started in the writing process, and to become more fluent writers.

Readers of my previous articles might recall that this activity is similar to the activity, Timed Repeated Thinking and Writing (TRTW). TRSW is similar to TRTW in that it involves the students writing about a book they have previously read in the extensive reading program. The difference is that instead of thinking about the book for a set period of time, the students skim their books before they begin to write.

Here are the instructions that I give to my students:

1. Skim a book that you have read for one minute.
2. Now write for two minutes about the book.
3. Stop. Read what you wrote for one minute.
4. Now skim the book again for one minute.
5. Now write again for two minutes. Start at the beginning.
6. Repeat step 3, 4, and 5 twice.

In Step 5, sometimes I change the instructions and tell students to continue writing—to pick up their writing at the end of the previous timed period. Some students like this option, as they are able to write more about their books.

The students must have their books in front of them for this activity.

The Benefits of TRTW

TRTW gives me insights into the reading that my students do. At the same time, the activity allows them to gain proficiency in the important skill of skimming, and helps them improve their writing fluency. I also like it because I can use it with most all levels of students, from high beginners to advanced. Finally, TRSW enables me to monitor my students reading. If they have not read a book, they will have little, if anything, to write about.



Conclusion

English teachers who want their students to read extensively are faced with a challenge. What do they, as teachers, actually do in the classroom? Simply having the students read for an entire class period strikes many teachers as inappropriate. I recommend extensive reading activities such as TRSW. Such activities make student reading a resource for language practice and use in reading, vocabulary learning, listening, speaking and writing.

Please take the time to give us the addresses of anyone else you think might be interested in receiving this newsletter of the CAPE Internet Connection: English Teacher Talk. And don't forget to write us with any comments you might have. Mahalo!

Contributor: Dr. Richard Day, Professor of ESL, University of Hawaii
Jai-Ho Yoo, CAPE President