A Humanistic Approach to the Teaching of English Reading for Tokuyama University Students

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Introduction

This article describes the results of a study on teaching reading using a humanistic approach based upon a writer's daily classroom experience and based on experiments performed on his own liberal arts students at Tokuyama University.

This was a humanistic experiment, which reflects the philosophy of an individual, designed to give individual students an opportunity to promote positive attitudes, positive self concept, and lasting interests toward reading.

Reading is central and essential to our university English courses. Since English reading is a required subject, reading instruction occurs at all times during the school day when printed materials are being utilized for classes. Teachers who make use of print media as teaching aids have the responsibility for developing the necessary knowledge, skills, and teaching strategies to turn our students into better readers. Given what we know about reading, it seems perfectly clear that a good reading course must provide both cognitive and affective learning based on student's practical needs. We recognize that the students in our classrooms have : different ability levels, language backgrounds, motives, and interests. There are gifted and talented students, slow learners, and less motivated students. Meeting the unique needs of such diverse individuals is a challenging task for any teacher.

We face a dilemma in trying to decide which view of the learning process is the most appropriate for meeting the needs of such diverse students. For example, should we be satisfied with one fixed methodology for a large number of students ? Should we use commercially produced materials which some teachers believe will guarantee successful learning for all ? Should we follow a model of inductive learning or a

deductive learning model? Should we believe adovocates who insist that, despite all the criticisms, a traditional grammar-translation method is still the most effective? Should we follow more innovative methods, such as the Natural Approach, Counseling-learning, the Total Physical Response, or the Communicational Approach? These are just a few examples of the types of questions which cause frustration when the consideration of what should be done in English instruction is undertaken. However, it is a frustration which results from the challenge of finding more efficient methods that will work better than those tried previously. If we identify what students might need to know, investigate what they do and do not know already, and gain insight into how they perceive their own abilities, we are surely able to discover the most suitable view of the learning process for English teaching.

This article, then, is not intended for teachers who insist on adherence to a single methodology; it is intended for teachers interested in trying more effective teaching methods than they actually use now and then improving their teaching strategies to present the best learning experience for their students.

This article is based on the writer's personal feeling that :

1. In universities most advocates of a conventional grammar-translation method believe that reading skills can be meaningfully and successfully taught using this method. They simply have been satisfied to continue their conventional practices, such as, the memorization of grammatical rules and vocabulary and using word-to-word translation, hoping for the best. While a majority of students seem to succeed under teacher-centered instruction, vast members exist whose intellectual and emotional needs are not being met in conventional classrooms. We cannot ignore the fact that in such classrooms cognitive learning is simply emphasized at the expense of affective and socialization concerns.

2. We must note that the major barrier to teaching reading in a common-sense and pleasurable way is the university's admission tests. At the high school level, entrance examinations do not simply test the student's academic potential and intelligence;

they deal exclusively with testing achievement. Therefore, whoever learns the most facts and develops skills in test-taking is the most likely to be successful. Programs for "test-takers" emphasize the rote learning of basic skills. They bore, frustrate and alienate students in a dialectic that fosters English anxiety that might keep them away from any English-oriented disciplines. As a result, many university students has become disenchanted with reading.

3. Teachers should have an eclectic attitude about a variety of approaches to reading instruction. Differing approaches, which reflect the philosophy of an individual or a group of other individuals about the teaching process as they relate to reading instruction, may be generally best used and effective in combination, with special consideration being given to the unique conditions within the instructional setting. For instance, the students' needs and expectations, experience and competency of the teacher, physical restrictions of the classroom, and materials available for use should all be considered.

4. The blame for the current inefficiency in teaching reading must be laid on the fact that few teachers even know the importance of collecting detailed background information on their students' aims in taking English courses. Students' aims are quite varied, however, most students have a common aim which is that they simply want to pass the examination in order to complete a graduation requirement by simply accumulating passing credits. As a result, teachers emphasize the quick recognition of isolated facts, not critical thinking, reasoning, problem solving, or the integration of information and the generalization of ideas. Such lessons are time taken away from "real teaching" and major objectives for reading instruction may remain neglected and impractical. The academic study of English does not lead many students to proficiency in reading and understanding English at a useful level even after quite a few years of study.

It goes without saying that an individual living in society in the

future can scarcely survive without having knowledge of English. We consider that any adult is at a disadvantage when he/she cannot read a serious newspaper like the Japan Times, an international news magazine such as Times or Newsweek, overseas economic magazines, pamphlets and brochures of foreign goods, and business letters.

It is said that the approximate reading ability level of these documents is estimated to be about high-school graduate level. However, some students in this university are likely to perform on a standardized test nearer to about the ninth or tenth grade level.

The writer has recorded the extent of failure or deficiency of reading skill in his university. In 1991, there were 35 out of 127 students who had reading deficiencies sufficient to cause a problem in the university. English instruction in high schools has been harmed by the emphasis on testing. Therefore, students who were forced to endure inappropriate teaching methods and a misplaced emphasis on reading exercises and workbooks, instead of reading, do not learn. These students graduate without having learned much except for a dislike of school. At worse, they fall into the ranks of the chronically failed and drop out of school.

The continued domination of testing in high schools effects texts, pedagogy, and educational goals for English instruction in universities. There are two major causes of the decline in the quality of English instruction : 1) Appreciation of good literature and reading materials gives way to emphasis on the mechanics of reading and not on thinking. 2) Teachers overtly continue to control the activities of the students in a formal manner and simply require them to maintain a passive and subordinate role. Such causes only make the teaching-learning situation worse and hinder any attempts at new approaches to English instruction.

In this article the writer looks at variables, which in the conventional approaches to reading instruction have been neglected, but should be a primary consideration, and could be most subject to modification to improve teaching reading. The variables which were paid attention for the humanistic class follow :

    1. The students : their needs, their motivation for learning, their attitudes and interests toward reading, their contact and

relationship with the teacher and friends, their study skills, their feelings.

2. The materials : the content, their aims and objectives, their activities and material sources, their projects.

3. The method : the combining approach—an eclectic attitude about the approaches (including programmed approaches and individualized reading).

4. The teacher : the strategies used in class, teaching skills, personality, attitude toward students, linguistic and cultural sophistication, ability to summarize and organize information, relationship to students in and out of class, classroom organizational tactics.

By having investigated each of these variables for several years through the reality of teaching reading in his university, in fact the writer was able to minimize some of the frustration and dissatisfaction mentioned before.　What the writer actually learned is that there exists a wide range of alternatives, both in teaching methods and in types of materials, and that the way to make his own lessons work effectively with his own students is to develop the ability to analyze the needs of his own students and to attempt change in his approach in order to improve on the teaching of reading.

The Students' Needs and Expectations

In an effort to better understand the students' needs, the writer conducted interviews for a full month at the beginning of the first semester in 1992.　He interviewed 51 freshmen and 76 sophomores who were taking his reading courses in order to clarify how the students respond to proposals for his effective teaching.　While their first interview showed him that his students could tell long stories on real issues of the reading courses in their own voices, they pointed out the mechanics of reading, a less satisfactory product of learning by a teacher's authoritarian role, and the potential consequences of the students' unwillingness to take part.

Interviews revealed that, among his students, individual needs and

expectations are varied :

1. The students want to fill a graduation requirement by simply accumulating a certain number of passing credits, not by demonstrating proficiency in understanding English at a useful level.

2. The students expect that English courses would lead to the ability to speak, not reading.

3. The students, whose reading styles are strongly global, want to receive sufficient instruction in reading, because those who can read at high-school graduate level with fluency and good comprehension are actually being left alone in their classroom.

4. The students would like to become independent and efficient readers, so that reading activities must be devised to individualize students' work at their own levels. They hope that there is little teacher-control of the reading activities in class.

5. The students complain that excessive skills exercises and high-level reading materials bore and frustrate them and, at worst, discourage reading. They say it is necessary for teachers to assess the specific interests of their students.

6. The students want to learn to read most rapidly through such activities as reading books or materials of their own choosing, engaging in small group or peer reading, writing opinions, performing in plays, listening to tape recordings, and watching TV or videos of interesting and well-organized programs which they have previously read about.

7. The students hope that the method used to teach them will be enjoyable for them, so that they will associate reading with pleasure, and choose to engage in present and future reading activities, and develop better self-concepts even though they had previously been labeled "remedial, slow, or poor readers".

8. The students hope that teachers will have well-organized instruction which will match techniques and skills with real-life application, and that teachers will recognize the effect that teaching something impractical has on their students who are forced to take English courses.

Not every student comes to hate English. However, repeated exposure to English in university, reinforced by impracticality of the material, can only plant questions in the minds of even the most capable students. Those students see English at present as nonsensical material that they are coerced into learning, not as a freely chosen, inherently interesting subject.

9. The students want teachers to know that there are a considerable number of students who are more inclined toward the liberal arts except English, and who see no future at all in English may develop English anxiety, and that they must endure two to four years of English for the sake of graduating with a fear that might keep them away from any English course.

10. Only a small minority of the liberal arts students believe that any English-oriented disciplines, and English abilities, are crucial for their future success. That is, it will give them a better chance for better jobs and to get English-oriented occupations. They think they can endure any highly specialized English curriculum in order to pass examinations for employment.

Matching teaching styles with learning styles is one of the most important, but difficult tasks for the improvement of teaching. The matching dilemma always becomes a challenge when we teachers consider the multiplicity of ways it can be done : teacher's overall style to students' overall styles ; level of task difficulty to students' abilities ; form of presentation to students' cognitive, affective, and psychological styles ; sequence, scope, quantity, structure, pace, goals, etc., to each student's corresponding learning style aspect. The list is endless. However, particularly in a humanistic class, it would seem desirable for us to anticipate style differences and prepare for them in advance of lessons by developing alternative methods, by arranging for some degree of student choice and planning, and by using different types and degrees of reinforcement.

Students and tasks basically demand different styles. It is important, however, for both teachers and students to compromise in order to fulfill their needs and expectations of what counts as an effective teaching－learning experience. Elaine Tarone and George Yule (1989)

point out that decisions about how to present the best learning experience for students inevitably depend upon the individual teacher's ability to work out what they seem to need.

Students' Motivation for Learning

No learning takes place without a motive.   When students enter universities, much of their motivation may be adult—or general public—generated.   The goals a student sets are very heavily affected by adult or general public expectations.   The university system provides the student with a sense of what society expects in the way of performance. If it is lax in its demand, then the student will believe that such are the expectations of society.   If the university system expects much, the student will probably have high expectations for himself or herself.

Motivating students is a complex involved process for teachers and often leave them puzzled when our plans fail.   Since there will be no one way to motivate every student, we must seek ways to cause each student to set his/her goals.

University students respect the teacher who is honest with them, the teacher who works for them, sits in on class projects as an advisor or a senior, and listens to problems and keeps them confidential, the teacher who is positive in his/her approach to teaching, trying different approaches, and the teacher who allows them to demonstrate why they think they are right or wrong, and praise them for their effort.

There are many bases for motivation : desire to succeed, desire to overcome difficulties, desire for approval, desire to excel, desire for attention, desire for self-realization, desire to avoid blame, etc..

In his two year experience of reading, the writer thought extensively of providing as many occasions as possible for realization of student desires by using varying stratigies and approaches.   As a result, the strategies and approaches he tried affected not only his classroom climate but also his students' attitude, feelings, curiosity about life, the future, and the unknown that is satisfied through a need to know and to understand through English.

To enhance the students' motivation for learning, the writer

provided the following :

1. Combination of approaches (It was provided for the students on an individual basis in each class period.) :
   — Individualized reading
   — Cooperative reading by interest grouping and pairing
   — Role-playing experience
   — Demonstration in groups and independently

2. High interest controlled materials (the students were given choices among reading materials when more than one type of material had accomplished the teacher's or student's objectives.) :
   — Literary texts and passages (e. g. diaries, anecdotes, biographies)
   — Plays, dramas
   — Letters, notes
   — Newspapers and magazines (headlines, articles, editorials, classified ads, radio/TV program guides)
   — Specialized articles, reports, reviews, essays, business letters, summaries, pamphlets, recipes
   — Instructions, directions, notices, rules and regulations, posters, signs, application forms, menus, greeting cards
   — Comic strips, cartoons and caricatures
   — Statistics, diagrams, flow charts, time-tables, maps
   — Telephone directories, encyclopedias

3. Informal classroom environment and atmosphere (The student was perceived as an active agent in his own learning, bringing his individuality and learning style to the task inasmuch as the goals were humanistic.) The followings were characterized :
   — Affective sharing of ideas, feelings, interests, joys and moods
   — Expansion of student-to-student discussions on the topics
   — Freedom to choose their own degree of participating in the strategies with their feelings and enthusiasm
   — Capitalization on the needs and interests and backgrounds of the students, regardless of their levels of reading ability

—Voluntary participation in self-disclosing activities

—Emphasis on the exchange of ideas and information

—Enlivening communication in classes as an exchange of lively situations emerging from the interest perspective of each student

—Providing success experiences —such as a five-minute presentation of their opinions or impressions, and demonstration of what they have read

—Teacher-student interchange

—Acceptance of feelings, offering praise, using student ideas

—A courteous use of enthusiasm

—A friendly, but businesslike behavior

—A good sense of humor

—Careful note on indifferent students and daydreamers

—Avoiding the lesson on a sarcastic note and an insincere response

—Being very enthusiastic when teaching reading

—Being positive in the teaching approach (emphasizing existing abilities of the students)

Several affective factors which are related to reading have been described by Mathewson (1976). He focused on the following factors : attitude, motivation, attention, comprehension, and acceptance. In his model he proposed motivation as a prerequisite to actual reading. A first factor closely related to motivation is attitude. A motivated student with a positive attitude does direct his/her attention toward the reading material. If attitude is not positive, the other four will not occur at all. Therefore, the teacher should foster positive attitudes so that students will want to read. In Japanese universities, however, English teachers have neglected to teach to such affective factors as attitude, motivation, and need (Widdows and Voller 1991).

Students' attitude and interests

In the main, the writer viewed the first two components of the Mathewson model attitudes and interests as basic to comprehension.

1．Assessing attitudes

It is crucial that we teachers assess attitudes to choose more appropriate materials, decide what points to emphasize, and formulate new organizational patterns.　Accuracy of student responses in attitude assessments is difficult to ensure.　However, when we teachers assess attitudes, we should treat more than one assessment situation as an ordinary routine classroom activity over a period of time.　The writer's specific suggestions for assessing attitudes follow.

To assure accuracy in assessment, the writer developed a checklist to guide which was used during the observation process and for gathering information of student's behaviors.　The following information was included : study behaviors, ways students use reading, evidence of application of reading skills taught, how students value reading, and tension signs in a reading situation, etc.

a) Interviewing.　Interviewing is less time consuming.　In a humanistic classroom, interviewing is necessary to develop good human relationship with the students.　It is very important in the beginning for teachers to ask questions in areas, other than reading, toward which the student is felt to have positive attitudes.　Some examples of questions the writer used for diagnostic purposes are :

Do you enjoy going to the library ?

Do you read very often outside of class ?

Do you subscribe to an English magazines or a newspaper published monthly ?

Do you check out books and magazines written in English from the library ?

Do you often go to bookstores ?

Do you usually read books when you have free time ?

Do you talk to friends about books that you have read ?

Do you read with you friends ?

Do you like a quiet room so you can read in your free time ?

Do you often start a book, but never finish it ?

Do you feel comfortable when you read an English book ?

Do you feel happy and interested when you are reading ?

Do you think reading is work ?

Would you rather play after school than read ?

Do you wish you could improve your English ability ?

Do you feel uncomfortable when you're asked to read in class ?

Do you think most of the English books your teachers choose are not interesting ?

Do you wish you could improve your English reading ability ?

How do you feel when you read at your desk at school ?

How do you feel when you read in your room at home ?

How do you feel when you are called on to read in class ?

How do you feel when you read instead of watch TV or videos ?

How do you feel when you read instead of playing outside ?

How do you feel when you look at books written in English ?

b) Questionnaire.   One of the most direct methods of assessing attitude toward reading is the questionnaire.   The writer usually asks his students to respond to questions similar to those of an interview once a semester, either orally or in writing.   There are forty-five questions for the scale items included : school, general reading, the teacher, the reading environment, class activities, and study habits, etc. (See Appendix A).   The writer was aware that his students responded as they felt he wished them to respond.

c) Observation.   One of the most valuable ways to assess attitudes is through observation.   This technique should be used to avoid preconceived idea and to assure accuracy in assessment.   The writer observed his students in informal, nonstructured situations such as lunch conversations with peers, chatting with their teacher, and independent reading

or study periods in the classroom. Keeping an anecdotal record is essential and fruitful for summarizing their significant behavior patterns. Some behavior patterns that seemed to be most indicative of attitudes in the humanistic reading class follow :

1. The students learned by cooperating not competing.
2. The students were willing to have the opportunity for positive independence among their peers who could share the responsibility for learning.
3. The students enjoyed recreational reading (or voluntary reading) as an activity of personal choice both at home and school. They enjoyed participating in other reading-related activities, including listening to stories and taped ones, looking at pictures, pamphlets, and brochures, watching TV and videos, demonstrating what they have read and how they feel after reading, and reading informational books.
4. The students were very interested in topics once considered taboo in conventional classes, such as sex, abortion, homosexuality, drugs, suicide, alcohol, and many other current social problems.
5. The students were fond of books, magazines, and newspaper articles dealing with real people with real problems in their lives.
6. The students did not like literature and the paricular books assigned.
7. The students were interested in reading books which took adolescents' and adults' concerns seriously.
8. The students did not expect negative comments.
9. The students wanted their teacher to accept them as valued individuals.
10. The students liked to make their success known to their peers.
11. The students wanted their teacher to respect their efforts in attempting to become better readers.

12. The students wanted their teacher to consider their feelings and give immediate attention to their needs and interests.

2. Assessing student interests

Since it is difficult to make judgements about what student interests will be at freshman and sophomore levels and since interests are often unique to given students or groups, it is necessary for a teacher to assess the specific interests of the students he/she teaches. Some of the techniques that the writer used in his humanistic class are the same types suggested for attitude assessment. These include interviews, questionnaires and inventories, and observation. In deciding on content for interest inventories, the writer considered free time activities, conversations with peers, clubs, TV and movie performances, trips, the library, wishes, and career preferences. An example of an interest inventory that includes all those items are shown in Appendix B.

In addition there are other sources in which information about student interests may be obtained: autobiographies, diaries, statements on their impressions of a book they have read, their records that have anecdotal notes, and voluntary demonstration of their reading materials. The writer did not obtain information about his students from those sources. He obtained it from listening to their conversations, noting their creative writing topics, and observing their free reading choices.

The writer found that almost 67 percent of his students are interested in reading magazines and newspaper articles closely related to their lives, interesting episodes about people, and world affairs.

3. A special way to extend interests

Students often make greater progress in reading when they read about things that interest them. Thus the instructional program should make provision for the integration and utilization of student interests as often as possible. The writer achieved considerable results by using the following techniques

to stimulate interest in reading or to improve reading atti-
tudes :

—Provided a wide variety of types of reading materials on
　many reading levels.　His students were given choices
　among reading materials when more than one type of
　material would accomplish the teacher's or learner's objec-
　tives.

—Gave his students choices in reading.　His students became
　a resource person in a special interest area and they shared
　their knowledge in the area by grouping or pairing with
　other students.　They often felt motivated to read more,
　and they felt better about themselve for having developed
　some degree of expertise in an area.

—Utilized interest groups or pairs.　Interest groups or pairs
　were based not on achievement but on common interests.
　Although the achievement levels of the students were
　widely varied, motivation for the group came from
　sharing a common interest in learning about something.
　Olson (1956) suggested a dependent relationship between
　motivation and success.　The student is successful because
　he/she is motivated.　They work together, they experience
　success together, they feel good about themselves, and
　they respond better to simple and difficult tasks without
　the usual boredom because they encourage each other by
　sharing interests.　One disadvantage to interest-based
　grouping or pairing lay in the various achievement levels
　of the students.　However, the writer provided assign-
　ments that were on the success level of each student,
　which inovolved much time and energy in reading both at
　school and home.　The experiences in the interest group
　put together students with differing achievement levels,
　giving each a chance to be a part of a success group and to
　work with students whose achievement was not like his
　own.　The writer likes to use interest grouping or pairing.
　He realizes that this diversity is needed in learning how to

cope with everyday and adult life. As a way for meeting
the individual needs of his students at all ability levels,
grouping or pairing is more effective than total class
instruction.

—Utilized high interest-controlled vocabulary materials.
Most materials used in conventional classes do not pro-
vide for the interests of freshmen or sophomores. Some
showed interests in reading stories, magazines, and news-
papers, including sentence patterns and vocabulary items
at a lower level of difficulty, and in familiar contents
that would appeal to them. The writer thought it very
important to utilize materials acceptable to his students.
Mathewson (1976) suggested that the acceptance or rejec-
tion of materials read influences attitude toward further
reading. Since interest would not appeal without a posi-
tive attitude, teachers should consider the use of materials
congruent with the values, attitudes, and beliefs of stu-
dents.

4. Study skills

English reading is central to most liberal arts in universities
and important in nearly all of them. Since English reading is
essential in an international society, all teachers who make use
of printed materials as teaching aids have the responsibility for
increasing the student's ability to use that tool. The term
"study skills" refers to any technique students use in learning
their assignments. The term also refers to the application of
reading skills to specific study tasks—organizing and scheduling
students' own time for study, taking note ; preparing reports,
or preparing for examinations, locating materials, remember-
ing, summarizing, understanding information, etc.. In any
case, study skills are needed when a student starts to make use
of actual reading materials.

In the humanistic English reading class, the writer needed to
make practical suggestions for developing positive attitudes
and competencies. Some study skills taught directly in reading

follow :

Using reference materials

    1．Using a dictionary

    2．Using encyclopedias

Locating and using other references, such as :

    1．Magazines and newspapers

    2．Periodicals

    3．Yearbooks

    4．Almanac

    5．Graphs, maps, and charts

    6．Government publications

Using library resources

    1．The Dewey Decimal System

    2．Library of Congress Classification

Organizing information

    1．Taking notes

    2．Outlining what is read (selecting main ideas and sup-
porting ideas)

    3．Summarizing paragraphs

A few activities the writer actually used in teaching his students to organize information by selecting main ideas and supporting detail appear below :

Teaching about main ideas

    1．Had his students underline the sentences that best express the main thought of each paragraph. (usually newspaper articles)

    2．Had his students organize and write underlined sentences to complete the outlines

    3．Had his students write a few sentences as summaries of a movie, a video, a news program, a role-playing, or a group discussion.

    4．Had his students write how they feel about a specific incident in a paragraph.

Teaching how to relate details to main ideas

    1．Had his students select words, phrases, and sentences

    that describe details of events

  2. Had his students list and rearrange the events in order.

  3. Had his students find sentences describing causes and events, and the factors that caused the incidents.

  When his students made original outlines or summary paragraphs by teacher-made directions, they all used all the study skills previously taught : to find available information on a certain topic. One of the main activities in his humanistic class is filling out a book report. (See Appendix C)

The Materials

  A realistic approach for teachers is to find books or other reading materials that will appeal and speak to students. However, most of the books and reading materials that are taught directly in traditional English classes are literature of teacher's favorites. They are usually too long, with boring descriptive passages, and have many flowery styles and too many difficult words and phrases. They are not attuned to the interests and concerns of students. It is unfortunate that many students are forced to learn the skills necessary to read (In fact, they did in high school English classes) and do not develop a permanent interest in reading.

  In the humanistic class a major goal for reading instruction is to help students find lasting pleasure and satisfaction from reading.

  The writer conducted one study of reading interest patterns of the liberal arts students whom he taught in order to understand what they like to read and watch on TV and videos. The top ten preferences of reading and viewing were :

  1. Sports

  2. Documentary-realistic

  3. Excitement-fantastic (Adventure)

  4. Fantasy-comedy

  5. People and problems

6. Recreational
7. Science
8. Hobbies-artistic
9. Social studies
10. Informational

The writer found that students like to read the young adult problem-type books which have seldom been taught directly in English classes and are not available in the university library for voluntary reading.　Those problem books are centered on a particular problem that young adults might encounter personally or one that their peers might encounter.　These books deal with interpersonal relationships, school problems, peer pressure, family relationships, and death of a parent.　They deal with social evils, environmental pollution or disruption, teacher-student relationships, and philosophy of life ; they deal with AIDS, drugs, alcohol, suicide, first sex, birth control, abortion, homosexuality, crime, and homicide.　Most students are very interested in reading books and other reading materials written with such understanding of and compassion for young adults' problems.

The writer used newspapers and magazines which help students to put real problems in perspective and may give them the encouragement to cope with and solve the problem.　As a result, they appealed to his liberal arts students and met with much more success in stimulating and extending interests and maintaining positive attitudes toward reading than in traditional lessons did.

The appeal of newspapers and magazines motivated many students to read who had not responded to traditional reading materials.　They got them started reading about subjects in which they were interested. Since informed participation is essential to the survival of an international society, teachers shoud help students become good readers of newspapers and magazines by teaching them how to interpret newspaper or magazine content critically.　The writer will suggest that English reading teachers should use more up-to-date-materials in order to improve reading attitudes.

The Method

The writer has identified several characteristics of his students' negative reaction to the current English curriculum of his university.

1. High-achieving students or those whose interests stray from the basics are likely to be frustrated by the adherence to a simple, conventional method of English teaching and an emphasis of rote learning.

2. Slow learners or low-achieving students are "Englishphobias" or have "English anxiety". They would like to keep away from any English-oriented disciplines.

3. The students see English classes as passive and monotonous ones that they are coerced into learning, not as a freely chosen, inherently interesting subject.

4. The students suspect the amount of English which is actually incorporated into real-world settings after graduation.

5. Some students think the skills learned are used only under certain limited conditions in certain jobs — mostly interpreters or translators and other English-oriented occupations. Their conclusions are mostly negative : they do not think they have to endure a few years of English for the sake of producing a few experts.

6. Some students have profound feelings of alienation and depression resulting from the entrance examination pressure in their high school days. They find that they do not study seriously and doubt whether it is all worthwhile. They do not think the university is the place of intellectual stimulation students envisioned.

7. Teachers usually ignore affective factors in learning to read. The students find teachers do not consider how students feel about reading (their attidudes), what students like to read (their interests), and what students need to know (their needs).

The writer could not ignore their responses which represent reality, so that he considered his own compromise solutions in which both the students and he would fulfill their expectations of what counts as an effective learning experience. In practice, this compromise took various forms regarding the approaches to improving reading instruction. The writer of this article has an eclectic attitude about the approaches— linguistic approach, structural approach, individualized reading, pro- grammed approach, natural approach, audiolingual approach, whole language approach, informal learning approach, and TPR. Each of these approaches reflects the philosophy of an individual or group of the learners about the teaching process as it relates to reading instruc- tion. However, each differs in its approach to achieving the goal—the successful achievement of independence in reading. The writer feels that differing approaches are generally best used and most effective in combination, with special consideration being given to unique condi- tions. Taking into consideration the students' needs, their interests, their learning styles, the writer's philosophy, experience, and competen- cy, independence in learning, physical restrictions of the classroom, and materials available for use, the writer selected individualized reading as the core around which to build the reading program, keeping the other two—whole language and informal learning as support techniques with which to reinforce, extend or enrich the skills of the students as well as to improve the positive reading attidudes in students.

How to individualize learning

Individualized reading is the major approach the writer used in the humanistic class. At the core of the humanistic approach to reading was its focus on "Learning feels good", with the center of the caring for each other recognizing individual differences. Individual learning is not an independent learning to read, nor is it simply teaching skills in context while it has some independent learning aspects. Olson (1956) described that three principles in the planning for individualized instruc- tion : seeking, self-pacing, and self-selection. He referred 'seeking' to internal development of the learner's guide and timetable. Olson be-

lieved that the learner will pace himself into the readiness stage and will tend to select materials to read which meet his/her level of readiness.   The writer employed the following strategies for the success of his individualized reading program :

1. Advance organization : One of the most important aspects of organizing the procedure is advance organization.   Depending upon his/her needs, interests and styles, each student first had free access to one-preferably more than two, from among the varied articles of magazines, newspapers, and other types of reading materials which the writer had provided for individual work in class.   The student usually scheduled his/her time so that he/she worked for fully ninety minutes.   At this point it is extremely important to ascertain that there are some students who are slow to warm up.   However: this is not necessarily a negative quality ; it is simply a student's work pattern. Understanding students individually is basic to humanistic teaching.

2. Opinion-report keeping : An opinion report form was distributed to each student before beginning.   The writer needed to obtain a variety of opinions from his students because he believed it was important to communicate with them through their reactions to materials read.   This is not a report on the student's impressions of reading materials that he/she has read, but his/her own records of how he/she has read critically.   The students wrote down their own opinions—how they thought, how they made inferences, and how they made judgements after having finished their own reading materials.   Opinion—report keeping develops critical reading, whose purpose is the development of abilities to select, reject, and adapt information and ideas found in reading.   Most university students have a large number of values related to each of the classifications Turner (1977) has shown as follows :

    1. Goodness (moral values, social values, religious values) 2. Power (political values, physical values) 3. Beauty (aesthetic

values) 4. Satisfaction (personal values, psychological values)
5. Truth (philosophical values, scientific values) 6. Order
(organizational values) 7. Worth (human values, economic
values, historical values). They are not at all clearly defined
and always changing, but an opinion report helps the students
interpret ideas encountered in reading as being supportive of
their values. The students actually enjoyed reading interrela-
ting values put forth by reading materials with their own
personal values.

3. Presentation : Presentation is the technique in which the stu-
dents tell the class about what they have read by themselves.
They provide references or information closely related to the
articles of the magazines, newspapers, and other types of read-
ing materials read. Presentation is an active, recreational
outlet, but probably the least used in reading instruction. At
the very beginning of the first semester most students were
puzzled as to how to present their assignments because they had
never experienced that before. Unlike typical class assignments,
presentation often exposed the students to possible criticism or
ridicule by their peers. Presentation also invoked behaviors
and emotions such as anxiety, hesitation, or reluctance. How-
ever, once the writer and a few volunteer students demonstrated
presentation techniques before class, such signs of weakness
disappeared. After all, the students became accustomed to the
presentation, and its risks were minimized and they eagerly
came to participate in it. The entire class was involved at the
same time. All the students were willing to share opinions,
impressions, and applause at the conclusion of the presentation.
The presentation led to a better understanding of the class
members as well as to the problems they have encountered in
their daily life. The presentation usually ended up being large-
ly intelligence supplying and criticism with a great deal of talk-
ing, explaining, and defending utilizing the references and topics
the students had collected. The presentation often encouraged
the students to experience emotions. Feelings were not at all

suppressed in class. Through their own presentation some students frustrated with school often expressed intense emotions they genuinely had felt. They were willing to tell someone else or the entire class who had problems like theirs. The presentation really played an important role to move on to causes and solutions for the frustration. Role reversal was used in class. The writer took the role of a student so that he demonstrated his presentation before class. Role reversal was essential to maintain class interest and increase the degree of willingness in class participation. In doing so, the writer himself was able to gain a better understanding of how his students felt and what they thought about his behaviors and attitudes. This is the real humanistic class.

Teacher Attitudes and Behavior

There is little doubt the teacher is often the most significant force in the development of positive attitudes. Even for university students the teacher is more important than the techniques, practices, and materials for use. It is also important that the teacher be a good model for his students. The writer found, however, that there are a large number of teachers who seldom enjoy reading, so that they have more difficulty in producing enthusiastic readers than do teachers who really enjoy it. This may be a vicious cycle of teaching and learning. In the humanistic class, students' needs and interests are acquired. The role of the teacher is crucial, for the teacher himself — his enthusiasm for and his love of print media — is a strong motivating factor.

Several approaches the writer used to develop or extend the reading interests of his students are :

1. The writer shared with his students information on a wide range of materials such as library books, newspapers and magazines, book reports, major area materials, films and filmstrips, slides and pictures, and videos and TV themes. The writer mainly used reading materials found in the student's everyday world.

2. The writer allowed his students to make significant choices of any of the three : competitively, individually, or cooperatively to pursue an assigned goal.

3. The writer provided a workshop-type atmosphere comfortable for relaxation and reading so that his students felt like participating in their reading actively.

4. The writer recommended peer support which is unavailable in the conventional classrooms.　This method encouraged supportive relationships, good communication skills, and higher-level thinking abilities.

5. The writer tried to become a co-learner with his students, not that of a "know it all".　The writer believes most students demonstrated respect for him.

6. The writer tried to be flexible meeting the students' diversities as often as possible : different ability levels, school backgrounds, needs, interests, and study habits.

7. The writer created an open-minded communication both in class and out of class.　Listening to his students was extremely important to building a trust relationship.　When his students knew that they were respected, they felt protected, safe, and comfortable.　Since there was a feeling of comfort, security, and trust in his classroom, his students were enthusiastic and positive to learn and more likely to be conscious of the present, aware of the future, and cognizant of the past.

8. The writer provided a 'tell one thing' session, where his students shared something—troubles, failure, oppression, and some other daily matters they had experienced.

9. The writer tried his best to understand his students' values which are very close to the center of self, since there is the correlation of motivation with value.

10. The writer thought out different approaches and teaching styles so that his students were able to have the opportunity of learning flexibility, because every year and every teacher was different.

Evaluation and Grading

The main problem was how to deal with some of the frustration of evaluation and grading in the humanistic class. Traditional measures were generally based on test scores or skills exercises and inaccurate observation of the student's performance. Most traditional reading teachers are obligated and pressured by their short-term goals—to finish workbooks and excessive skills exercises in order to administer tests weekly, monthly, and yearly, to raise test score, to teach all the reading skills required at a given year level, to keep detailed records of their student's progress in learning those skills, and to shape the teaching. At the same time students find less and less enjoyment in reading as they move through the years, because a stubborn reliance on such a method has made learning to read difficult and many students become disenchanted. In the humanistic instruction the writer considers it very important to fulfill the long-term goals —to want to read, to enjoy reading, to read with fluency and comprehension, and to read skillfully and critically enough to survive in an international society. Since the role of a humanistic teacher needs to change in order for evaluation and grading to be creative and open-hearted, the writer employed multiple measures of performance : his own recorded observations of his students, his students' self-evaluation, and the student's frank discussion of his/her own reading experience.

Emphasis was mainly placed on teacher-student cooperation. The writer did give greater weight to the student's existing reading ability, attitude, needs, and learning styles than to his student's performance on a reading test. What follows are the means by which the writer accomplished this goal :

1. The writer and his students judged development and needs together to meet two important conditions : to become a better reader with good comprehension and to associate reading with pleasure and thus choose to engage in this activity in the future.
2. A reading check list was kept on an individual basis to provide

a running record of development in reading.

3. The students kept their own records of such things as titles, authors, general ideas, and reactions to reading materials. This was in the form of a letter to the writer. He was able to give comments and communicate with his students. The number of reading materials read showed increased quantity in reading. It was shown that there has been development with quantity of reading. His students could do self-evaluation of reading behaviors and progress and then set goals for further reading.

4. Presentation was structured to judge a level of competency in reading skills. According to the degree of difficulty regarding vocabulary, length and content of a reading material, and reference or information collected, his students as well as the writer responded on an evaluation chart by marking whether they strongly disagree, are undecided, agree, or strongly agree with the presentation made by his students. Though the presentation, their comprehension and enjoyment in reading grew immensely.

5. Teacher observations during independent, pair, or group reading were recorded according to the behaviors expected during the reading activity. The writer noted whether his students were activily engaged, to some degree engaged, or distracted. He targeted any particular reading behaviors and used a duplicate of his class list to record what was observed. He discussed such information with his students not only to be able to relate better to his students but also to obtain more ideas for improving his own strategies in reading instruction. It was crucial for the writer to match his instruction to the reading styles of the 127 students in his humanistic reading class. When instructional programs took students reading styles in account, his students chose reading more often as a free-time activity, enjoyed it more, and showed greater self-confidence than had previously been the case in a traditionally structured classroom.

Summary

In the traditional classroom, students meet their learning objectives individually or competitively. However, in the humanistic classroom, the creative involvement and growth of individual students through their own actions with regard to materials and the environment is the central purpose. The student is conceived as an active agent in learning, bringing individuality and learning style to the task. The humanistic teacher, then, must, in essence, learn from the students' growth and learning. He must learn to observe the students, talk with them on a one-to-one or one-to-group basis, and get to know each of them really well. Understanding students individually is basic to humanistic teaching. The teacher who would become more flexible, more open-hearted, and more humanistic could try to get inside the student's mind and understand their thinking and behaviors. In fact, as the writer studied his students more carefully for fully two years and got to know them better, he was able to gain new insights into learning. He actually learned to appreciate the creative nature of his students' thinking and to understand the critical needs for more meaningful experiences and reading materials. It is without a doubt that his view of teaching reading has changed since he realized more fully how his students learned to read.

The theme throughout this article has been that humanistic instruction is centered on the creative involvement and development of individuals. The growth of individuals through their own actions on choosing reading materials and the environment, and through experiencing success from their own actions is the desired outcome. The development of methods, student evaluation, and curriculum should result from the continuous, positive, and creative imput of people involved in teaching : students-teachers in action, curriculum workers, administrators, innovators, advocates, and others. The writer has realized through his daily experience of teaching reading that a successful humanistic approach can be achieved only as teachers change their perceptions of teaching and learning and attempt to effect changes in the routines and rituals of

teaching reading, and make changes in their classroom environments in the university.

Finally, by having reviewed his two-year experience of teaching reading, the writer found that the problems of teaching reading stem much more from the differences among the students, the complexing of the students, and their learning process than from the deficiencies of his teaching method.　He also found that if teachers take seriously the principle that great differences in intellectual, social, emotional, and physical maturity exist in every student or group, then the classroom climate will improve and will become an active, challenging learning laboratory where students can carry on a wide variety of learning activities simultaneously.　He also found that the most important factor is the individual teacher's abilities and what the teacher offers to the students being taught.

These findings suggest that we should develop sensitivity to students' needs, with all the intellectual, physical, emotional and social differences which they bring to class, and then analize the students' behaviors systematically during the teaching act, and develop a teaching strategy which will overcome weakness and emphasize strengths.

The major strengths and weaknesses of the methods the writer used in his humanistic class are summarized below.　Students' evaluation of the teacher's reading instruction are also included.

Strengths
1. The students were able to provide their own source of reading materials and those materials were more likely to satisfy reading interests.
2. The students were introduced to a much greater variety of reading materials.
3. Pairs or small groups were formed as needed for specific reading objectives and the presentation.
4. Each student experienced greater self worth.
5. There was a ide flexibility in reading.
6. There was diminished competition, but this improved the feeling of sharing and made the reading experience more meaning-

ful.

7. It encouraged better teacher-student communication through time-free and easy talk.

8. There was greater opportunity for interaction among peers in bringing together ideas and information gained from independent reading in or out of class.

9. The students were able to share their own ideas and information — but, more importantly, they learned to listen to other peers.

10. The students were able to develop the habit of critical analysis of any reading material.

11. Meaning was really much more important than vocabulary control.

12. The students learned thinking and problem-solving skills in comprehension.

13. The students learned to have a positive attitude toward books and other types of reading materials and would like to pick up material to read.

14. The students needed little guidance in material selection.

Weaknesses

1. The writer needed to have read many reading materials that interest his students.

2. The writer needed to be able to teach skills as needed.

3. It was hard to judge difficulty of reading materials.

4. It put a heavy clerical burden on the writer.

5. There were inadequate library materials in the university.

6. It required extra preparation by the writer : sources of information, TV and video scripts, audio-vidual aids, and chart-making.

7. Important gains in student progress were not likely to be measured on the test at the end of the semester.

8. There was danger of insufficient skill development.

9. It was inefficient to teach to more than thirty students at a time.

10. The writer needed a considerable amount of time to explain the

program in the very beginning.

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APPENDIX A

Questionnaire
(Assessing attitude toward reading)

(1) You enjoy going to the library.
(2) You enjoy sitting reading somewhere on campus.
(3) You like to read with your friends.
(4) You often check out many library books written in English.
(5) You check out books of the library but never have time to read them through.
(6) Most of the books you check out at the library are not interesting.
(7) Sometimes you forget about library books that you have in your desk.
(8) You like to collect references that closely relate to your task.
(9) How do you feel when you go to the library ?
(10) How do you feel when you read a book in free time ?
(11) How do you feel when you are in reading group ?
(12) How do you feel about the reading materials of your own choice ?
(13) How do you feel when you read before class ?
(14) How do you feel when it's time for reading ?
(15) How do you feel when you see your friend read English texts ?
(16) How do you feel when you are asked to demonstrate what you have read before class ?
(17) How do you feel when your friend know you can not read well ?
(18) You have books or other reading materials at home.
(19) You wish you had a library full of books at home.
(20) You enjoy reading at home.
(21) You would like to read TV themes or video scripts.
(22) You would rather play or do some other things after school than read.
(23) You seldom read in your room at home.
(24) You would rather look at the pictures in an English book than read it.
(25) You feel happy when you are reading.
(26) How do you feel when you are reading an interesting book ?
(27) How do you feel about horror books ?
(28) How do you feel if you can not find any interesting books ?
(29) You talk to friends about books that you have read.
(30) You read several books each week.
(31) Once you start an English book but never finish it.
(32) You would like your teachers to select any book interesting to students.
(33) Your teachers should use carefully chosen reading materials that the students can read.
(34) Most of the books a teacher chooses are boring.
(35) You talk to your teachers about reading materials that you have read.
(36) You would like your teachers to introduce many different kinds of reading materials to read.
(37) You like for the room to be quiet so you can read in your free time.
(38) When you have free time on campus, you usually read a book.
(39) How do you feel when you have more books at home than at school ?
(40) How do you feel when you read on campus when it's warm ?
(41) You have a chance to read to someone at home.
(42) You wish you could read as many English books as you want.
(43) You like to demonstrate before class what you have read.
(44) You would like to be alone to read books.
(45) You like recreational reading at school or at home.

Thanks a lot for responding each statement.

APPENDIX B

INTEREST INVENTORY

Major _____ Year _____ No. ____ Name _____

1. In my free time, I like to _____ .
2. I have (a few/many/no) friends to talk with and spend time doing something with.
3. I (like/do not like) to talk with my friends.
   My favorite topics are _____ .
4. I (like/do not like) group activities.
   My favorite group activities are _____ .
5. I usually (help/do not help) my friends when they are in trouble.
6. I (belong/do not belong) to _____ club.
7. I (like/do not like) to watch _____ game.
   My favorite sports are _____ .
8. I (often/seldom/never) go to the movies.
   My favorite movies are _____ .
   My favorite movie stars are _____ .
9. I (like/do not like) to take trips.
   I have visited _____ .
   I would like to visit _____ .
10. I (like/do not like) to read. I read story books (yes/no) ; newspaper (yes/no) ; magazines (yes/no) ; comic books (yes/no).
    My favorites are _____ .
11. I (want/do not want) to read reading materials written in English.
12. I (like/do not like) to read the particular books assigned in English classes.
13. I (have/have not) purchased books with money I have earned from a part-time job after school.
14. I (like/do not like) to read about _____ .
15. I (like/do not like) to go to the library.
16. I (have/have not) borrowed English books in the library.
17. I (have/have not) taken monthly or weekly magazines or daily newspapers. I read _____ .
18. I (like/do not like) to read at home.
19. I (think/do not think) it important to read books, magazines, and newspapers written in English.
20. After graduating from the university, I think I would like to
    _____ .

APPENDIX C

BOOK REPORT
Active Reading Program   No. _____
— Let's discover the fun of reading
and become life long readers —

Major _____   Year _____   No. ____   Name _____

I. Title :

II. Reference :

     Material —
     Author —
     Date of issue —

III. Main ideas :

     Supporting details —

IV. Personal reactions :

     Proposing a point at issue —

     Describing cause and effect —

     Solving the problem —

     Expressing an idea, opinion, philosophy, or feeling —