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Working with texts in the English lessons

Task 3

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BEFECTETÉS A JÖVŐBE



Task 3

There are advantages and disadvantages of each procedure. Can think of a few?

Procedure	Advantages	Disadvantages
1. The students take turns reading out one or two sentences each.		
2. The teacher reads out the whole passage (or the text is recorded and the teacher plays the audio file) and the learners follow the text with their eyes silently.		
3. The learners read the text to themselves silently.		



Key

1. The students take turns reading out one or two sentences each.

It can be useful *at the very early stages of learning the language* – the learner needs to learn and practice the pronunciation of words and sentences. At more advanced stages, however, it is advisable to separate any kind of pronunciation practice from the reading experience.

When the students read aloud, they have to focus more on the articulation of sounds than the meaning of what they are reading. This is especially true in group learning scenarios – where inhibitions and shyness might also come in as a hindering factor.

It might seem to be an obvious advantage of this type of reading *that the learners are all reading the text at the same pace* – but *can you really call “reading” what they are all doing?* The one that is doing the reading aloud is focusing on articulation, the others are following with their eyes a probably imperfect audio version of the text, which might interfere with their own reading process and is definitely not coming at them at their own reading pace!

2. The teacher reads out the whole passage (or the text is recorded and the teacher plays the audio file) and the learners follow the text with their eyes.

This is definitely *an improved version of someone else reading out the text aloud* – as the teacher’s pronunciation is likely to serve as *a good model* and the way he or she breaks the sentences into chunks and places emphasis on certain words supports the learners’ efforts to make sense of the text. This is especially true in the case of English texts, where commas are rarely inserted between clauses and linking words are often omitted – thus making it often times difficult to segment the flow of words into chunks that really belong together.

But exactly this is the biggest disadvantage of the teacher’s read-aloud or an audio recording accompanying the reading process: it is an essential part of developing successful reading skills to practise segmentation, to figure out what belongs to what, to detect emphasis and to separate main from supporting information.

3. The learners read the text to themselves silently.

When the learners read the text silently, they have the chance to do so *at their most comfortable speed* and to *devote all their attention to creating the meaning of the text*. They can slow down or even re-read when they get to a more difficult part, and speed up again at easy parts.