



An Integrated Approach to Language Teaching and Reading Strategies

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Abstract

This research paper explores the role of integrated approaches to language teaching, with a specific focus on reading. The integration of reading with other language skills—writing, speaking, and listening—plays a significant role in enhancing the development of second language proficiency. The paper draws from various theoretical perspectives and practical considerations, including material selection, schema theory, the combination of extensive and intensive reading, and the integration of all four language skills. Furthermore, the paper discusses the reading strategies employed in language acquisition, such as top-down and bottom-up processing, skimming, and scanning. These strategies not only support reading comprehension but also enhance the learner's engagement with authentic texts and sociocultural contexts.

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1. *Introduction*

The study of second languages necessitates an approach that emphasizes the interconnectedness of language skills. Brown (2007) suggests that interactive, integrated approaches to language teaching are highly effective, as they emphasize the interrelationship between different language skills. Specifically, reading ability can be developed most effectively when associated with writing, listening, and speaking activities. This approach ensures that learners gain proficiency in language as a whole, rather than in isolated skills. In this context, the integration of reading and writing is especially critical, as both skills are interdependent in language acquisition.

This paper explores how an interactive language teaching practicum can be designed to achieve optimal results through four major components: material selection, schema theory, the combination of extensive and intensive reading, and the integration of reading with other language skills. Each of these aspects will be discussed in detail, drawing from both theoretical frameworks and practical applications.

1.1 Material Selection

Material selection is a crucial component in language teaching, particularly in a reading-focused practicum. Brown (2007) emphasizes that the use of authentic materials is essential for maximizing learner motivation and creating a more meaningful connection to the target language. Authentic materials provide exposure to real language in context, offer insights into the target culture, and ensure

that learning is aligned with the learners' needs.

Mickan and Lopez (2017) further discuss the socialization aspect of language teaching, explaining that language learning is a collaborative activity. Texts, as resources, serve as tools for teachers and students to work together, sharing, disputing, and creating meaning. In a reading-based language classroom, authentic texts foster a deeper understanding of the language by engaging learners in authentic comprehension activities. These tasks encourage learners to form personal connections with the material, which promotes better retention and expression of ideas in the target language.

1.2 Schema Theory

One important theoretical framework in understanding reading comprehension is schema theory. According to Bartlett (1932), schema theory refers to the interaction between stored information and new information in the learner's mind. When reading a text, learners draw upon prior knowledge, or "schemas," which help them understand and integrate new information. This interaction is particularly important in language learning, as it enables learners to absorb new knowledge and link it to their existing understanding. Carrell (1987) identifies three types of schema that influence reading comprehension: language schema, content schema, and form schema. Content schema, which refers to background knowledge relevant to the content of a text, plays a significant role in understanding and interpreting reading material. For example, learners' prior cultural

experiences or knowledge about a particular location can affect their comprehension of a text related to that context. Anderson and Lesgold (1981) and Johnson (1982) emphasize the importance of activating content schema in second-language learners, as it aids in developing a more robust understanding of texts.

To implement this concept in the classroom, teachers should activate learners' background knowledge prior to reading. For instance, showing pictures or providing context about a city, like Vancouver, can enhance comprehension by preparing students to engage with the text on a deeper level. This activation of prior knowledge promotes successful top-down processing, which facilitates overall reading comprehension.

1.3 Combination of Extensive and Intensive Reading

Reading can be categorized into two types: extensive and intensive. Extensive reading is designed to foster general comprehension and fluency, while intensive reading focuses on specific skills, such as vocabulary acquisition and grammar. According to research, combining both approaches can lead to substantial improvements in second language proficiency.

In this practicum, extensive reading tasks are designed to help students get an overall understanding of the text and improve their ability to skim. For example, students are asked to skim an article about the lifestyle of residents in a cabin park, Paradise Ridge, and identify the differences between this lifestyle and that of townspeople. This task not only promotes a general understanding

of the text but also encourages critical thinking.

On the other hand, intensive reading tasks focus on extracting detailed information and developing deeper comprehension. For example, students may be asked to scan an article to locate specific information, write a critique, or analyze the use of grammar and vocabulary. These tasks promote accuracy, deepen understanding, and encourage learners to engage with the text at a more granular level.

1.4 Integration of Reading, Writing, Speaking, and Listening

In real-life language use, the four skills—reading, writing, speaking, and listening—are rarely isolated. Therefore, language teaching should aim to integrate these skills. This practicum incorporates integrated tasks that allow students to practice multiple language skills simultaneously.

For instance, after reading a text, students engage in writing tasks where they summarize, critique, or exchange ideas with their classmates. Speaking is incorporated through discussions and debates based on the text. Listening tasks also play a role, as students listen to a recording of the article read by a native speaker to improve their pronunciation and intonation. These integrated tasks help reinforce language learning by connecting reading to other skills, ensuring that students develop a well-rounded proficiency in the language.

2. Literature Review

In the contemporary field of language education, an integrated approach to teaching seeks to connect the various language skills—listening, speaking,

reading, and writing—through contextualized and purposeful learning experiences. The relationship between language teaching methodologies and reading strategies is particularly significant, as reading is the cornerstone of language acquisition. Research suggests that integrating these elements not only enhances individual language skills but also facilitates broader cognitive development. This literature review explores the theory and practice surrounding integrated language teaching and reading strategies, drawing on key studies and real-world applications that highlight the benefits and challenges of this integration in the classroom.

1. Integrated Approaches to Language Teaching

The integration of language skills has been a central focus in many pedagogical approaches. For example, the Whole Language Approach (Goodman, 1986) promotes an authentic, holistic method where language skills are taught in an interconnected context. In classrooms where the Whole Language Approach is implemented, teachers design activities where speaking, listening, reading, and writing occur simultaneously. One real-world example is the use of storytelling, where students practice speaking, listening, and reading while discussing and creating narratives. This model aligns with the belief that language skills are interrelated, and that instruction should reflect the natural use of language in real-life situations.

Similarly, Task-Based Language Teaching (TBLT) emphasizes completing real-world tasks that require multiple language skills. Ellis (2003) advocates for TBLT, arguing

that learners acquire language by actively using it to solve problems. In practice, learners might be asked to plan a trip, which involves reading a travel guide (reading), discussing the itinerary (speaking), listening to travel-related podcasts (listening), and writing an itinerary (writing). Research supports the effectiveness of such integrated approaches, especially in communicative language classrooms. Studies by Skehan (1998) show that learners exposed to task-based, integrated instruction demonstrate increased fluency and overall language competence.

However, some scholars, such as Swain (2000), argue that explicit instruction in individual skills—particularly grammar—may still be necessary for achieving higher levels of proficiency. While integration has clear benefits, it must be balanced with focused instruction to ensure mastery in each area. A study by Shintani (2015) found that combining explicit grammar instruction with communicative tasks resulted in improved grammatical accuracy alongside fluency, suggesting that integration works best when complemented by specific, targeted teaching.

2. Reading Strategies in Language Teaching

Reading strategies are vital tools for enhancing comprehension and retention in second language learners. Anderson (2008) notes that successful readers use a variety of cognitive and metacognitive strategies, such as previewing, summarizing, and self-monitoring, to engage with texts more effectively. In classrooms, these strategies are often taught explicitly to empower learners. For instance, students might be

taught how to skim a text to get the gist of it before diving into detailed reading. Studies have shown that such strategies can improve reading comprehension and vocabulary acquisition.

One notable example comes from a study by Carrell (1989), which found that learners who used specific strategies like skimming and scanning were better able to extract meaning from complex academic texts. This is particularly relevant for students learning English for academic purposes, where reading comprehension is crucial. Similarly, Paris and Paris (2003) emphasize the importance of metacognitive awareness in reading, suggesting that learners who reflect on their reading processes are more likely to retain information and engage deeply with texts. A practical example of this in classrooms involves students discussing the strategies they used to approach a reading task, thereby fostering a reflective approach to learning.

3. The Intersection of Language Teaching and Reading Strategies

Research has shown that integrating reading strategies within broader language instruction not only enhances reading skills but also supports the development of speaking, writing, and listening skills. A study by Yamashita (2008) found that when learners received explicit instruction in reading strategies, their overall language proficiency improved. In particular, strategies such as summarizing and predicting—which are often used in reading—can also support writing tasks by helping students organize their ideas more clearly. For instance, in a classroom, after reading an article, students might

summarize the main points in writing, applying the same strategies that improve reading comprehension to their writing process.

Additionally, integrating reading strategies within language teaching increases student engagement and motivation. Fardous and Riazi (2015) found that learners who were taught reading strategies as part of a task-based approach demonstrated higher levels of confidence and enthusiasm in their language abilities. In classrooms where reading strategies are embedded within communicative, task-based learning environments, students are more likely to see the relevance of reading in their everyday language use. One example is teaching students how to infer meaning from context during reading and then asking them to use similar inferencing techniques while participating in a conversation.

Despite the clear advantages, integrating reading strategies into language instruction presents challenges. One major obstacle is the varying proficiency levels of learners within a single classroom. Research by Baker and Brown (1984) highlights that for lower-proficiency learners, complex reading strategies may be overwhelming, and scaffolded support is crucial. In practice, this might mean providing struggling learners with additional guidance through simplified texts and more structured support before gradually introducing more complex strategies. This ensures that all learners, regardless of their proficiency level, can successfully apply reading strategies and benefit from integrated teaching approaches.

An integrated approach to language teaching that incorporates reading strategies offers a promising path toward developing well-rounded language learners. The literature suggests that combining language skills with reading strategies enhances learners' ability to navigate texts and engage with language in meaningful ways. Real-world examples of successful implementation, such as task-based projects and storytelling activities, highlight the practical benefits of such integration. However, successful integration requires careful attention to learners' individual needs, proficiency levels, and the selection of appropriate strategies. Further research is needed to explore the specific contexts in which integrated language teaching and reading strategies are most effective, particularly in diverse classrooms with varying learner needs.

3. Theoretical Framework

3.1 Reading Strategies: Top-Down and Bottom-Up

Top-down and bottom-up processing strategies are essential components of reading instruction. Top-down processing involves using prior knowledge and expectations to make sense of a text, while bottom-up processing focuses on decoding the linguistic features, such as vocabulary and grammar.

In this practicum, both strategies are used to enhance students' reading comprehension. Top-down strategies are encouraged through tasks that activate prior knowledge, such as providing background information or using visuals to scaffold understanding. Bottom-up strategies are implemented through focused tasks on grammar and vocabulary,

such as analyzing sentence structures or identifying key language features within the text.

Additionally, reading strategies such as skimming and scanning are employed to help students efficiently navigate texts. Skimming allows students to quickly grasp the general meaning, while scanning helps them locate specific details. These strategies foster fluency and accuracy in reading.

3.2 Language and Learning Background

The language used in the selected reading material is carefully chosen to ensure accessibility for the target students. Given their high language proficiency, the material is designed to be simple and straightforward, yet challenging enough to stimulate intellectual engagement. The primary objective of the tasks included in this teaching plan is to encourage students to think critically, extending their analysis beyond surface-level comprehension. In doing so, the tasks aim to enhance the students' ability to engage with the text on a deeper level, fostering their comprehensive skills in areas such as grammar, reading strategies, and other language skills, including speaking, listening, and writing. The tasks are constructed with the intent to train students in critical thinking, providing opportunities for them to make connections between the content, language features, and broader sociocultural contexts.

The learners in this context are second-year non-English specialization students at the University of Yangon, Myanmar. Although their English proficiency varies, most students have achieved high marks in their matriculation examinations and have studied English for twelve years. These

students are generally highly motivated and demonstrate strong capabilities in English language learning. All non-English specialization students at the University of Yangon are required to study English as part of their curriculum, with a particular emphasis on developing communicative skills. In their English course, students

study the four key language skills: reading, writing, speaking, and listening. While this teaching practicum focuses primarily on reading, it incorporates the other language skills—speaking, listening, and writing—as well as grammar, ensuring an integrated approach to language learning.

4. Methodology

4.1 Teaching Plan

Teaching Content	
Topic	Paradise Ridge
Source of the Material	Unit 3A "Dream Homes," <i>Straightforward</i> Level 2B
About the Passage	a) This reading passage is an excerpt from the authentic English textbook <i>Straightforward</i> Level 2B. b) The article is brief and contains few challenging words, making it accessible for intermediate learners. c) The passage discusses an alternative lifestyle in Paradise Ridge, a cabin park located in the heart of the Columbia Mountains. The central goal of this reading lesson is to help students develop general comprehension skills while encouraging them to think critically beyond the text itself.
Proficiency Level	Intermediate
Duration	50 minutes

4.2 Teaching Methods

(a) Communicative Language Teaching

The teaching approach integrates communicative language teaching, which emphasizes the importance of interaction and real-life communication in language learning. Students will engage in meaningful tasks that involve speaking, writing, listening, and reading in context.

(b) Combination of Extensive and Intensive Reading

Both extensive and intensive reading strategies will be utilized. Extensive reading will promote general comprehension and fluency, while intensive reading will focus on accuracy, detail, and deeper analysis of the text.

(c) Integration of Reading, Writing, Speaking, and Listening

The lesson will integrate all four language skills, ensuring that reading tasks are supplemented with activities that enhance speaking, listening, and writing, reflecting the interconnectedness of language use in real-life contexts.

4.3 Teaching Goals

4.3.1 Knowledge Goals:

- Students will acquire knowledge about the City of Vancouver and its cultural context.
- Students will explore the alternative lifestyle of the residents of Paradise Ridge, comparing it to their own experiences.

4.3.2 Skills Goals:

- a) Students will master two essential reading strategies: skimming and scanning, to improve their ability to process texts efficiently.
- b) Through repeated listening to the article's recording, students will refine their pronunciation and accent, aiming for accuracy similar to that of a native speaker.
- c) Students will practice the correct use of modals of obligation, permission, and prohibition, applying them meaningfully and appropriately through the reading material.
- d) The students' speaking skills will be enhanced as they share opinions and engage in discussions with peers about the text.
- e) The students will improve their persuasive writing skills by composing an opinion essay on the topic, "Would you like to live in Paradise Ridge? Why or why not?"

4.3.3 Emotional Goals:

- a) Students will develop the ability to compare and contrast two lifestyles—one presented in the article and one from their personal experiences.
- b) Students will gain confidence in expressing and sharing their opinions during paired and group discussions, fostering a sense of ownership over their language learning.

4.4 Teaching Tools

4.4.1 PowerPoint (PPT)

Advantages:

- a) PPT presentations save time and energy for both teachers and students.
- b) They are an effective teaching tool, providing students with a visual aid that complements the text and allows for clarity in understanding both words and images.
- c) The use of colorful pictures and slides

helps to engage students and stimulates interest in the lesson.

- d) PPT slides summarize key points from the lesson, allowing students to focus on essential information.

4.4.2 Pictures

Pictures are powerful tools in language learning. They serve as effective teaching aids that can visually represent concepts or contexts that may be difficult to convey through text alone. In this lesson, pictures of the City of Vancouver will be shown to students before reading the article to introduce them to the background context of the city. This visual pre-reading activity will capture students' interest and support their comprehension of the text.

4.4.3 Recording

The article will be read aloud by a native speaker at a normal pace. Students will listen to the recording twice, which will help them understand the correct pronunciation and intonation. This method will also help students read the article more naturally, mimicking a native speaker's accent. Using recordings in the classroom benefits speaking skills by providing students with a model to emulate.

The recording will serve two main purposes: first, to focus students' attention on grammar, specifically the use of modals of obligation, permission, and prohibition, and second, to guide students in achieving correct pronunciation and accent during reading. These listening tasks are designed to reinforce grammar understanding while promoting more natural language production. See Table 1.

Procedure	Time	Activities	Objectives
Lead-in	5 mins	Teacher introduces the City of Vancouver in British Columbia, Canada to the students through the photos on PPT.	To let students get knowledge of the City of Vancouver
Extensive reading	10 mins	Reading: Paradise Ridge - Students read the magazine article in 3 minutes and answer the questions: - How is the lifestyle of the residents of Paradise Ridge? - How is it different from the lifestyle of townspeople? - Students read the whole article in 3 minutes again and choose which section of the magazine it comes from: - Advice for home buyers - Alternative lifestyles - Home improvements	- To train the students' ability of skimming - To urge the students to read for the general comprehension of the text - To improve the students' critical thinking skill beyond the text
Intensive reading	30 mins	- Students read the article again in four minutes and tick the information that is mentioned in the article: - Paradise Ridge opened over 20 years ago. - A lot of people want to live there. - It is very near a primary school and community college. - You are not allowed to drive your car in the cabin park. - Most of the residents work in Vancouver. - Everybody helps with the work of the community. - Meetings of the residents take place every month. - They grow vegetables in a community garden. - Students list three possible advantages and disadvantages of living in Paradise Ridge and then share their ideas in groups of four. - Students listen to the recording and underline the rules in the article. The teacher guides the students to emphasize the use of modals of obligation, permission and prohibition. - Teacher explains the use of modals of obligation, permission and prohibition and then asks the students to write four sentences describing the rules of a public place such as hospital, library, museum, school and theatre by using the modals of obligation, permission and prohibition in the article. - Students listen to the recording again, and read after the recording.	- To train the students' ability of scanning. - To urge the students to get detailed information through scanning the article. - To train the students to learn grammar: the use of modals of obligation, permission and prohibition through reading the article - To train the students to be able to read the article with the correct pronunciation and accent like a native speaker - To train the students to have self-confidence and courage in sharing their opinions with their group members
Writing assignment	5 mins	Write an opinion essay on "Would you like to live in Paradise Ridge? Why or why not?"	To combine reading with writing.

4.5 Assessment

4.5.1 Informal Assessment

Given that the tasks designed throughout the teaching process focus on encouraging students' opinions and critical thinking, it is important to provide positive reinforcement for every student response. The primary goal is to foster a learning environment where students feel confident in expressing their opinions and actively

engaging in pair and group work. In this approach, all answers, regardless of their complexity, are appreciated as contributions to the discussion. Different teachers may adopt various evaluation standards for assessing student performance in the classroom, and the following three oral assessment categories are outlined in Table 2.

Table 2: Assessment standards

Assessment Standard	Description
Good!	Answers are correct, simple, and brief but lack critical thinking.
Very Good!	Answers demonstrate creativity, personal insight, and original thought.
Excellent! / Perfect! / Fantastic!	Answers are well-organized, grammatically correct, and respond thoughtfully to challenging questions.

It is crucial to provide only positive feedback for all student responses in order to encourage them to share their ideas confidently. Offering negative feedback can undermine their self-esteem and make them hesitant to contribute in class. Positive reinforcement will create a supportive learning atmosphere where students feel valued and motivated to participate actively.

4.5.2 Formal Assessment

(a) Assessment of Teaching

After the lesson, students will be asked to assess the teacher's performance. This assessment will be completed through a feedback form, where students will rate different aspects of the teaching process and provide their reasoning for each

choice. The feedback form will include a series of sections related to teaching effectiveness, including clarity of explanations, engagement with students, and the appropriateness of the materials used. Students will also be invited to share suggestions and comments regarding the lesson and teaching methods.

The purpose of this assessment is to encourage reflective practice on the part of both the teacher and the students. By incorporating student feedback, the teacher can identify areas for improvement and refine teaching strategies for future lessons. This process promotes the continuous development of teaching methods that better meet the needs of learners. See Table3.

Table 3: Sheet for Assessment on Teaching

part	I like it.	Average	I don't like it.	Why	Suggestion/Comment
Lead-in					
Extensive reading					
Intensive reading					
Writing assignment					

(b) Self-Assessment

In addition to assessing the teacher's performance, students will also engage in self-assessment to reflect on their own contributions and performance in class. To facilitate this, a self-reflection table has been designed to guide students through the process of evaluating their participation in class activities. This self-assessment tool aims to encourage students to consider the benefits they have gained from their involvement, the challenges they may have encountered,

and areas in which they can improve moving forward.

By engaging in self-evaluation, students will become more aware of their learning process and take responsibility for their development. This reflective practice will help students identify strengths and areas for growth, ultimately enhancing their overall learning experience and motivating them to participate more effectively in future class activities. Through continuous self-assessment, students will develop greater self-awareness and refine their language skills. See Table4

Table 4: Self-assessment Sheet

Part	Excellent	Good	Average	Poor	gains	problems	How to try to perform better next time?
Brainstorming in the Lead-in part							
Carrying out two extensive reading tasks							
Carrying out five intensive reading tasks							
Discussion with partners							
Writing assignment							

Figure 1 shows the teaching flowchart of this teaching practicum.

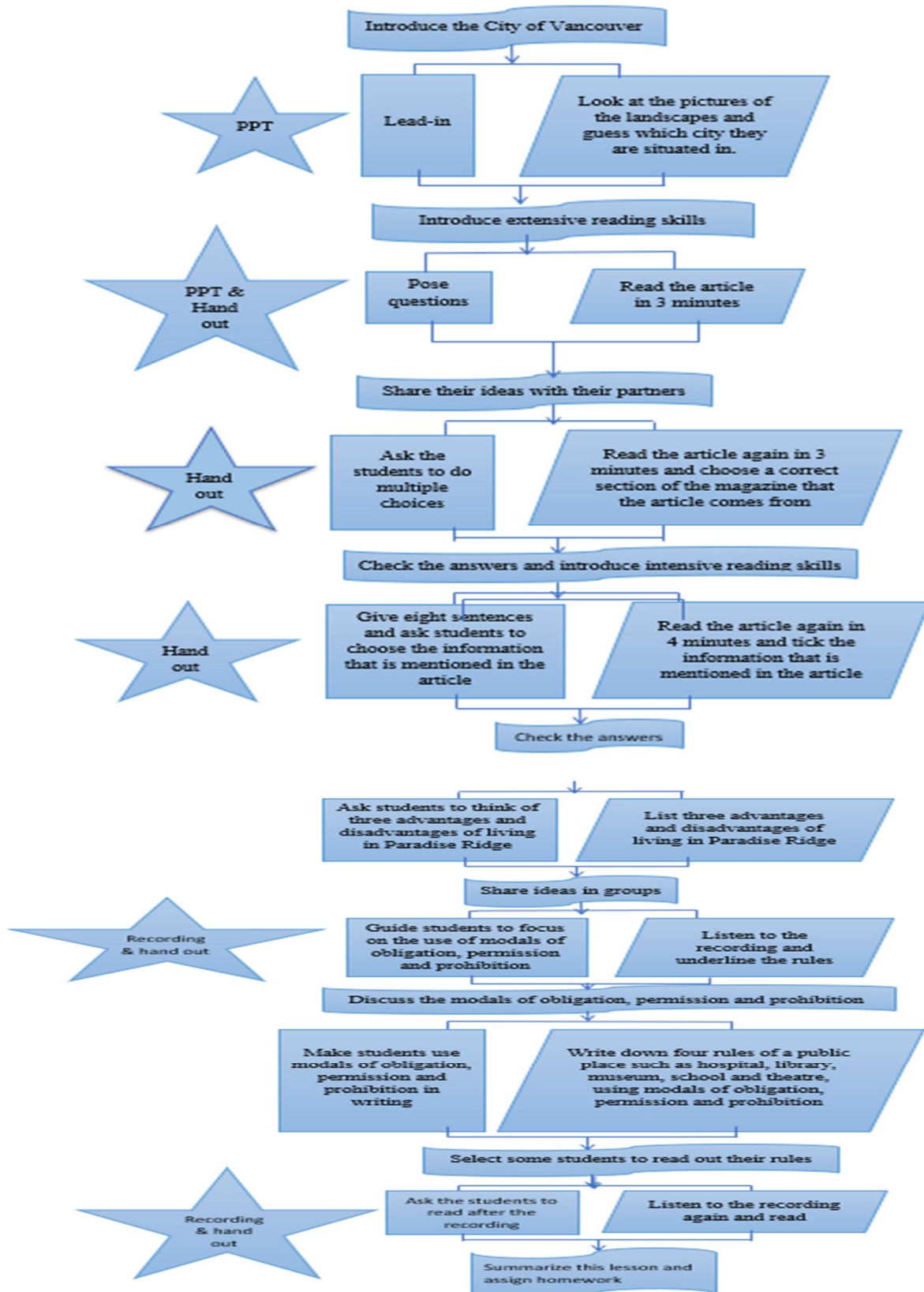


Figure 1: The Teaching Flowchart

The meaning of signs and acronyms in this flowchart

	Teaching aids
	Teacher activities
	Student activities
	Teacher logic

5. Conclusion

This research highlights the importance of an integrated approach to language teaching that emphasizes the interconnectedness of reading, writing, speaking, and listening. By combining extensive and intensive reading, activating schema theory, and selecting authentic materials, language teaching can be more dynamic and effective. Moreover, employing reading strategies such as top-down and bottom-up processing enhances comprehension and supports language development.

Ultimately, the integration of language skills provides a holistic approach to second language acquisition. The careful design of lessons that incorporate these strategies enables learners to engage meaningfully with texts, foster critical thinking, and develop comprehensive language skills necessary for effective communication in real-world situations. Through these approaches, language learners are better equipped to achieve proficiency and participate in sociocultural practices in the target language.

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