

Meeting of English faculty to discuss Reading
March 10, 2014
Notes

Present: Phil Bennett, Julia Christmas, Monica Hamciuc, Anne Howard, Brendan Rodda,
Johanna Sandberg, Iain Stanley, Tim Stoeckel

Summary of Reading

1. M. Hamciuc summarized *How reading works: The building blocks of fluency and comprehension* (Grabe, 2009):
 - a. The lower level cognitive processes involved in reading include:
 - word recognition
 - recognition of script, morphemes
 - use of contextual support to aid in word recognition is typical of poor readers
 - syntactic parsing (grammar knowledge)
 - proposition formation
 - b. All of these processes are active in working memory
 - c. All of these processes need to be automatized for fluent reading
 - d. Implications for instruction include:
 - development of large recognition vocabulary through continuous practice (through activities such as extensive reading)

Points of Discussion

1. Some MIC students have not yet developed automaticity at the level of letter recognition. It may be useful to develop assessment to identify these students and to plan specialized support for them. Some textbooks have activities to develop recognition of letters, words, and phrases (e.g. Basic Reading Power – Longman)
2. It would be beneficial to program individualized vocabulary learning based upon feedback students get from vocabulary testing. This could possibly be done through the ARC.
3. It is important to raise students' awareness of their specific needs/areas of weakness. Even higher level learners should understand that knowing words involves more than just recognition.
4. There is a need to provide learning training to help students better understand:
 - a. the purpose of various learning activities (especially those whose purpose is not obvious)
 - b. what learning a foreign language actually involves
5. It would be beneficial to have course-specific vocabulary study lists (and materials) for content courses.

6. Based on the importance of syntactic parsing in reading, grammar points which are particularly useful in reading could be included in course objectives for the reading courses. The focus of such objectives would be on meaning.