

Developing Exercises for Extended Reading Comprehension of Literary Texts for Grade 4 Students

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Abstract— This article proposes a process for designing and developing reading comprehension exercises for literary texts, thereby helping teachers understand how to design, select, and utilize reading comprehension exercises in the teaching and learning process, and assess the reading comprehension of 4th-grade students according to the requirements of the 2018 General Education Program for Literature. Hopefully, these suggestions are crucial in enhancing the teaching of reading comprehension of literary texts to achieve high efficiency and meet the Program's requirements.

Keywords—Literary Texts, Grade 4 Students, Reading Comprehension, Exercises for Extended Reading Comprehension.

I. INTRODUCTION

Building a system of reading comprehension exercises to assess students' abilities is a necessary skill for a primary school teacher. In particular, creating a system of reading comprehension exercises for literary texts plays an extremely important role, especially in extended reading lessons. To construct a system of reading comprehension exercises that aligns with the requirements of the 2018 General Education Program for Literature, teachers need to clearly understand the objectives, requirements to be achieved, teaching content, teaching methods, and procedures to test and evaluate students' reading comprehension activities. Additionally, teachers need to comprehend the process of developing reading comprehension exercises to meet the established objectives and requirements.

This article proposes a process for designing and developing reading comprehension exercises for literary texts, thereby helping teachers understand how to design, select, and utilize reading comprehension exercises in the teaching and learning process, and assess the reading comprehension of 4th-grade students according to the requirements of the 2018 General Education Program for Literature. Hopefully, these suggestions are crucial in enhancing the teaching of reading comprehension of literary texts to achieve high efficiency and meet the Program's requirements.

II. RESEARCH CONTENT

2.1. Characteristics of reading comprehension exercises for literary texts through extensive reading activities for 4th-grade students

In addition to the typical types of exercises in the Vietnamese subject, we have supplemented reading

comprehension exercises for literary texts with rich and diverse forms suitable for developing students' reading comprehension skills. Specifically, these include:

- Recognition exercises: Identifying the title of the text and recognizing specific information within the text.
- Comprehension exercises: Understanding the content of the text and grasping the lesson and the intended message conveyed by the teacher.
- Evaluation and feedback exercises: Assessing learners' knowledge reception and providing feedback on the lesson content
- Application exercises: Applying learned knowledge and skills to practical problem-solving scenarios, and comparing and contrasting lessons to apply knowledge and skills learned.

Recognition and comprehension exercises focus on lower-level skill development, involving memorization and basic understanding of knowledge. Evaluation and feedback exercises aim to develop students' ability to assess and respond to others' opinions, fostering debate skills and encouraging reasoned responses to make constructive changes. Application exercises represent a higher-level type, presenting problem scenarios to stimulate independent thinking and reasoning skills. Completing these exercises helps students develop language mastery, problem-solving abilities, and logical reasoning skills.

2.2 Process of designing and using reading comprehension exercises for literary texts through extensive reading activities for 4th-grade students

2.2.1. Design process

Based on students' abilities, consensus within the professional group, and approval from the school board to develop and design reading comprehension exercises, we outline the process as follows:

Step 1: Define the purpose of creating exercises: When constructing a set of exercises, it's crucial to not randomly select or design each exercise type. Instead, clearly define the objectives, purpose, and align them with the content of the text. This involves building a series of exercises that progressively meet the specified requirements. Choose and design each exercise type based on the content of the text and consider the psychological characteristics and abilities of students using the texts available in the textbook.

Step 2: Select the exercise content: After determining the purpose, proceed with crafting exercise questions. To ensure questions are suitable and facilitate students' understanding of knowledge and skills, tailor them to the lesson content from the selected textbook. Design approaches may include converting essay questions into multiple-choice test questions, grouping questions, and using visuals to assist students in accurately identifying the keywords being sought.

Step 3: Organize the exercise structure: Teachers should select suitable organizational and teaching methods that align with the exercise requirements and content. For instance, organizing practice activities, visual demonstrations, small group tasks, and class presentations not only encourages students to actively explore new knowledge but also enhances their awareness and motivation to learn.

Step 4: Establish assessment criteria: Each exercise should have specific assessment criteria tailored to the exercise requirements and the individual characteristics of students in the class. This includes identifying key text elements such as the title, character background, topic summary, and textual details using suggested methods. Criteria also cover recognizing descriptive words related to appearance, behavior, images, and sounds expressed in the text.

Step 5: Testing and revision: Following exercise completion, conduct testing with students and gather feedback from grade 4 teachers to assess the exercise's suitability regarding its purpose, theoretical foundation, and construction requirements. Adjust exercises to better fit student characteristics, work quality, and incorporate professional feedback.

This revised version clarifies the steps involved in designing and implementing reading comprehension exercises, ensuring clarity and coherence throughout the process.

2.2.2 Compile Exercises

a. Story Text

Read the following story and complete the tasks below:

Calling Grapefruit

When he was young, Luong The Vinh often climbed grapefruit trees in the garden. Once, a grapefruit fell into the pond. Vinh panicked, thinking it was lost. Unexpectedly, the grapefruit floated to the surface, and he used a pole to poke it to the shore and retrieved it.

Another time, Vinh and his friends were herding buffaloes in the village and played grapefruit kicking in the field. Unexpectedly, the grapefruit ball rolled far and fell into a deep and narrow hole, leaving the children confused and not knowing how to retrieve it. Just then, a passerby saw this and issued a challenge:

"Whoever retrieves the grapefruit, I will reward him!"

While his friends struggled, one of them used a buffalo rope to tie a noose and lower it into the hole to catch the grapefruit, but its round shape caused it to slip off. Another ran home to fetch a pole to poke it,... and Luong The Vinh took his hat, ran to a nearby puddle, scooped water, and poured it down the hole. As he did so, he cheerfully recited:

"Oh grapefruit, hear my plea, Don't act so proud, Don't hide away, Come up with me, Let's have fun today...!"

In no time, the grapefruit slowly floated up into Luong The Vinh's hands. The passerby praised Vinh for his cleverness and quick thinking and rewarded him with money. As for his friends, they were in awe of Vinh and observed him closely while he worked, leading to rumors spreading that Vinh knew a "magic chant" to summon grapefruits from deep holes.

(According to Quoc Chan, *An ancient legend of our country*)

Question 1: What did Luong The Vinh do when the grapefruit fell into the deep hole?

- A. Use a pole to hit the edge of the hole
- B. Get water from a nearby puddle and pour it into the hole
- C. Release a buffalo rope to tie the grapefruit
- D. Use a hat to scoop water from the pond and pour it into the hole

Question 2: What was the main reason the passerby rewarded Luong The Vinh?

- A. He retrieved the grapefruit from the hole
- B. He recited a spell to summon the grapefruit
- C. He showed cleverness and problem-solving skills
- D. He entertained everyone with his poem

Question 3: What did Luong The Vinh's action of fetching water from the puddle and pouring it into the hole to retrieve the grapefruit make everyone think about him?

- A. He knew a spell to summon the grapefruit
- B. He demonstrated cleverness and problem-solving ability
- C. He had no other way to retrieve the grapefruit
- D. He amused everyone with his poem

Question 4: What is the main message of the story?

- A. Nothing is impossible
- B. Being clever and resourceful helps solve problems
- C. Persistence is key in difficult situations
- D. Cooperation and creativity can solve any problem

Question 5: From Luong The Vinh's story, what lesson can be learned? How can you achieve it?

b. Descriptive Text

Read the following text and complete the tasks below:

The Moon in My Hometown

The deep yellow moon slowly rises from behind the dark green bamboo hedge. It appears as if a cool south wind blows from the moon, casting golden rays over the rippling rice fields. Wherever these golden rays touch, there erupts spontaneous joyous singing. As the moon travels, the bamboo hedge is bathed in a milky hue. The moon hides amidst the lush foliage of ancient banyan trees at the village entrance, their leaves twinkling mischievously. The moon descends into the water, casting shimmering reflections. It illuminates teeth, lands on eyes, and gently caresses the silver hair of the elderly. It seems hardly anyone in my village stays indoors. Each household gathers around small tables or mats in their yards, everyone sitting and gazing at the moon. The crops under the moonlight resemble golden rice grains basking in its glow. Echoes of young men and women singing fill the air. The clanging of water buckets reverberates, all sounds tinted with moonlight. In the shadows, a little boy sits, upset with his mother. Moonlight softly touches his mother's forehead, revealing her wrinkled skin and weariness. Seeing this, the boy approaches his mother gently. A cool breeze ruffles her hair. Late into the night, the moon ascends higher and smaller.

My village slumbers while the moon remains vigilant, as if watching over us.

(According to Phan Si Chau)

Question 1: What scene does the above text describe?

- A. The scene of the moon rising in the village
- B. The scene of village activities
- C. The scene of the village under the moonlight
- D. The scene of late moonlit night in the village

Question 2: How are the moon and the night scene in the village described?

- A. The moon and the night scene are warm and bustling with the sounds of the young men in the village.
- B. The moon is quiet and the night scene is peaceful, with only the sound of water buckets hitting each other.
- C. The moon is bright and the night scene is bustling with the echoing singing of young people.
- D. The moon and the night scene are filled with moonlight, with cheerful singing and the sound of water buckets clanging.

Question 3: Point out the rhetorical device used in the sentence "The moon embraces the old people's silver hair"?

- A. Comparison.
- B. Hyperbole.
- C. Personification.
- D. Metonymy.

Question 4: Why did the boy stop being angry and walk gently back to his mother?

- A. Because under the moonlight, he saw his mother's forehead appear very beautiful
- B. Because under the moonlight, he saw his mother's wrinkled skin and fatigue
- C. Because under the moonlight, he saw the wind making his mother's hair fly
- D. Because under the moonlight, he saw his mother sad and crying

Question 5: Have you watched the moon with your family? Imagine or tell about that moonlit night.

c. Poetry Text

Read the following text and complete the tasks below:

Our Village's Rice Grains

Our village's rice grains
 Have the taste of alluvium
 From Kinh Thay River
 Have the scent of lotus
 In the brimming lake
 There are mother's songs
 Sweet and bitter...
 Our village's rice grains
 There's a storm in July
 There's rain in March
 Drops of sweat
 In June noons
 The water seems to boil
 All the sailfish die
 Crabs crawl ashore
 My mother goes to plant rice...
 Our village's rice grains
 Sent to the front lines
 Sent far and wide
 I'm happy, I sing

Our village's golden grains...

(Tran Dang Khoa)

Question 1: According to the poem "Our village's rice grains", what does the rice grain carry with it from the homeland?

- A. The scent of lotus
- B. The taste of alluvium of Kinh Thay River
- C. Mother's songs, both sweet and bitter
- D. All of the above

Question 2: What does the image "The water seems to be cooked by someone / All the sailfish die" suggest?

- A. Boiling water used to clean fish
- B. Water in the fields is as hot as boiling water, making it unbearable for fish
- C. Water in the fields is so hot that it kills sailfish
- D. Hot water kills all sailfish in ponds

Question 3: Why does the author call rice grains "golden grains"?

- A. Rice grains from the paddy fields are yellow in color, akin to gold
- B. Rice grains represent the hard work and sweat of parents and children
- C. Rice grains contribute to the nation's overall victory
- D. Both B and C are correct

Question 4: Identify images from the poem that depict the hardships of farmers.

Question 5: Farmers work tirelessly to produce rice. How can you express gratitude to farmers for their hard work in rice cultivation?

2.2.3. Using Exercises

In regular and periodic assessments, teachers can utilize exercises designed as mentioned above. During periodic assessments, these exercises can be assigned after students have re-read one or several texts according to genre characteristics. Students complete them independently either in class or at home, and teachers can evaluate their work through comments or scoring. To assess students' progress throughout the learning process, teachers can also incorporate these exercises into written exams or periodic tests (mid-term or end of school year).

III. CONCLUSION

Designing exercises for teaching, testing, and assessment is an essential task for teachers. This effort aims to best support teaching and learning activities, particularly in primary schools and in the teaching of Vietnamese. To meet the requirements and teaching objectives specific to each school and student, teachers must cultivate the habit of designing, teaching, testing, and evaluating according to the program's guidelines. This practice includes honing skills in crafting reading comprehension exercises for Vietnamese and other language exercises. Such efforts contribute to enhancing teaching proficiency and thereby improving the effectiveness of teaching, testing, and evaluation in primary schools today.

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