

THE FORGOTTEN THIRD SKILL
READING A FOREIGN LANGUAGE

Mascille Killerman

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This book suggests a method for teaching reading to students ages 9 to 13. It encompasses the experiences of the author while teaching French to English-speaking students in a middle school in Yorkshire. The author details specific episodes in teaching reading to demonstrate her theory.

Killerman begins with an analysis of reading as seen by Smith, Vygotsky and others, highlighting points which are always good to remember. However, this is only a starting point to explore the importance of reading in learning a second language. The book emphasizes reading for itself; next reading for pleasure; and third, reading to reinforce general language learning.

The method is based on what the author calls "moments." These moments are composed of story-telling and retelling. The author bases her moments on various premises. An important one is that any heading should be adequate and pertinent to the students. She suggests using literature which reflects the target language. However, she emphasizes that this must be adapted to the students' needs. The assumption is that students have had at least three semesters of English and can communicate in the target language.

The author does not suggest a means for evaluating reading. This is to be measured by interaction with the teacher. The cloze procedure is presented but as a teaching tool, not a measuring one.

Although the method is designed for the teaching of French and most of the examples are in French, the theory and method can be adapted to the teaching of reading in English to students who speak other languages. It does, however, entail work for the teacher.