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Author(s)	Kirkpatrick, T. A.
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PARALLEL READING: USING READING TO STIMULATE QUESTIONING, ANSWERING AND NOTE-TAKING

THOMAS A KIRKPATRICK

Introduction

The basic aim of parallel reading is to provide a classroom activity where students have to *ask questions, answer questions* and *take notes*. Parallel reading can also be used to give students the opportunity of practising a particular grammatical item. It further provides stimulus for composition writing. The activity then requires students to *read, speak, listen* and *write*.

An Example

This example of parallel reading consists of two reading passages and two worksheets (see Appendix 1). These materials have been designed to allow students to *practise* question asking and answering using the third person singular of the present tense to describe habitual action and present state. It also requires students to take notes and to write a brief composition — using the third person singular of the present tense.

Method

- Divide the class into pairs.
- Give one member of each pair the *reading passage* of the “*Doctor’s Interview*” and the *worksheet* for the reading passage of the “*Lecturer’s Interview*”.
- Give the other member of each pair the *reading passage* of the “*Lecturer’s Interview*” and the *worksheet* for the reading passage of the “*Doctor’s Interview*”.
- Ask the students to read their particular reading passage. *One* student in each pair will therefore read the “*Doctor’s Interview*”, while *the other* will read the “*Lecturer’s Interview*”.
- After the students have read their particular reading passage, ask the member of each pair who has the “*Doctor*” worksheet to

ask his partner the questions on the “Doctor” worksheet. This student must also note down on his worksheet the answers to his questions.

- Repeat the process but this time it is the member of the pair who has the “Lecturer” worksheet who asks the questions.

(It is important to tell the students that they are reading and asking about a *third* person. They are *not* to assume the roles of the doctor or the lecturer.)

- Finally, students can be asked to write about the person they have asked questions about. One member in each pair will therefore write about the doctor while the other will write about the lecturer. Students should write a passage based on the notes they have taken. The passage should be written using the third person singular of the present tense.

Follow-up Activities and Other Uses for Parallel Reading

- As this particular parallel reading activity comprises reading passages about working wives, it can lead to a *discussion* about working wives. In other words, these two passages can be used to stimulate discussion on the pros and cons of wives going out to work.
- Parallel reading can be used at a much more advanced level and can be used for subjects other than English. For example, one of the reading passages could describe the political system in Japan while the other could describe the political system in Indonesia. These passages could then be used to stimulate discussion on the comparison between the two political systems.

Parallel Reading (Appendix 1)

(To be given to Student A)

WORKING WIVES — THE DOCTOR'S INTERVIEW

Well, my name's Helen Dormandy spelled DORMANDY ... I'm 50 ... and I'm a doctor.

Yes, where do you work?

Well, I work in a hospital near Bolestier Road.

Er ... are you married?

Yes, I'm married ... my husband is a doctor, too.

I see ... ehm ... what time do you get up?

Oh, about 6.30 usually ... and then I have breakfast shortly after.

Ehm ... what ... er ... and what time do you go to work?

Well, I go to work at 8 o'clock by bus.

Ehm ... and er ... what time does work finish?

Er ... 5 o'clock, usually.

Usually about 5 o'clock ... I see and ... in the evenings ... what do you do in the evenings?

Well, I sometimes cook, sometimes my husband cooks, sometimes my daughter cooks.

Ehm ... ehm ... er ... do you watch television?

No, I don't watch T.V. a lot ... but I read.

Oh ... what sort of things do you read?

Well, I usually read books about work, you know ... books about medicine, things like that.

Ehm ... and what sort of time do you go to bed?

Er ... generally about 11 o'clock ... I would say ... yes, about 11 o'clock.

Thank you very much.

(To be given to Student A)

WORKING WIVES — THE LECTURER'S INTERVIEW (Worksheet)

What is the name of the person speaking?

How old is she?

Is she married?

What does he do?

What does she do?

What time does she get up in the mornings ?

What does she have for breakfast?

What time does she go to work?

How does she go to work?

What time does she leave work?

*What does she do in the evenings?

How many children has she got?

Where does her child come from?

How old is she?

(To be given to Student B)

WORKING WIVES — THE LECTURER'S INTERVIEW

My name is Lyn Wilkins ... spelled WILKINS ... I'm 38.

Yes ... er ... are you married?

Yes, I'm married ... my husband's a teacher.

Eh huh ... and what do you do?

I'm a lecturer at NUS.

Oh, I see ... what time do you get up in the mornings?

Oh, I get up at about 7.30 ... I have breakfast .. oh, some toast and coffee usually.

I see ... and er what time do you go to work?

About 8.30 ... I go by car.

And er ... what time does work finish?

I finish at about 5.30.

Eh, huh ... and er ... what do you do in the evening?

Oh ... look after our child ... she's adopted ... her name's Jill ...

She comes from India.

Eh, huh ... how old is she?

She's 3 years old.

Oh I see ... how interesting ... thank you.

(To be given to Student B)

WORKING WIVES — THE DOCTOR'S INTERVIEW (Worksheet)

What is the name of the person speaking?

How old is she?

What does she do?

Where does she work?

Is she married?

What does her husband do?

When does she get up?

When does she go to work?

How does she go to work?

When does she finish work?

Does she always cook in the evenings?

Does she have any children?

Does she often watch television?

What sort of books does she read?