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Global Education: Promoting Reader's Digest in Extensive Reading for Understanding Diverse Cultures

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Developing global competencies through global education is imperative in today's world. It prepares students to understand, function and develop in global communities. One of the competencies that is essential in today's interconnected world is understanding various cultures all around the world. It may help them to increase their cultural awareness, which is crucial in making them see and respect other perspectives. Moreover, cultural awareness may also facilitate them in appreciating the essential values of people from various places. It may also prove beneficial in the future when students engage in professional environments that require collaboration with individuals from diverse cultures.

Students must immerse themselves in communities that actively practice different cultures to fully understand them and prepare for future endeavours. A common way to have immersion is by travelling to the places and staying in the communities for a period of time. However, not many people can afford to do this as they may have constraints such as financial support, time limitations and language barriers. Therefore, they need to opt for a more affordable way to learn about different cultures. One of the ways is through extensive reading. Extensive reading is reading various texts for pleasure and to enhance general knowledge. It is different from intensive reading, where students read for comprehension for a specific purpose, such as completing learning tasks. Unlike intensive reading, extensive reading allows students to choose the text they want to read and explore what they like. Therefore, extensive reading can be a tool for students to understand diverse cultures all around the world by selecting reading materials related to cultures.



One of the essential reading materials that can be chosen for extensive reading is Readers' Digest. It is an international magazine that was first published in 1938 in the United Kingdom, it is now available in 23 countries worldwide, and it was published in 22 languages in 40 countries during its peak (Readers' Digest. 2024). In Asia, the magazine is available in English and Mandarin. The articles in the magazine, regardless of the language, include diverse topics such as personal stories, health, travel, food, history, cultural practices and current events. The topics offer cultural insights from various places in the world that can be read in multiple languages. Therefore, students can understand and appreciate the contents better. As such, they can be interconnected to cultures other than their own which can arouse their interest in reading.

Figure 1 A picture of Readers' Digest magazine



One good thing to know is that Readers' Digest can be accessed in the hardcopy form and digital form. The digital form in various languages can be accessed at <https://www.rd.com/readers-digest-worldwide/>. As such, the magazine can cater for the needs of extensive reading both ways, either conventionally or digitally. By offering the contents in various languages, the magazine provides access to reading materials with cultural insights in the students' preferred language. Thus, they may appreciate the content more by eliminating the language barrier for facilitating them to understand the content.

Readers' Digest also contains educational values in terms of enhancing students' vocabulary. Readers can learn unfamiliar words when reading articles in the magazine. As a result, they can improve their comprehension and broaden their knowledge and understanding of cultural diversity and global issues. When they read other reading materials, they may find it easier to understand any cultural insights embedded in the materials as they have sufficient vocabulary to comprehend the materials.

By reading the magazine regularly, students can develop a deeper understanding, appreciation and awareness of various cultures around the world. Students should be encouraged to read Readers' Digest for extensive reading. Some activities can also be carried out in class to instil their interest in reading Readers' Digest regularly. What is there to lose anyway? Knowledge is power and reading simply opens doors to the knowledge and cultural insights of the world.

Reference

Readers' Digest. (2024). Reader's Digest Worldwide <https://www.rd.com/readers-digest-worldwide/>