

**The Effects of the Directed Reading-Thinking Activity on EFL
Students' Referential and Inferential Comprehension**

By

Abdel Salam Abdel Khalek El-Koumy

**Full Professor Curriculum and Instruction
of English as a Foreign Language
at Suez Canal University, Egypt**

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Introduction

With the advent of the Internet, students in the 21st century have access to more information than any other students before them. Unfortunately, much of this information is biased, flawed, or even incorrect. Some webmasters spread a lot of false or misleading information because of their ignorance or ill intention. Therefore, now more than ever before, students need to merge their own thinking with the information they read to comprehend what is between and beyond the lines. However, a major issue in reading comprehension, as it exists nowadays in Egyptian secondary schools, is that students experience difficulty when responding to referential and inferential reading comprehension questions.

In a pilot study conducted by the researcher with 40 first-year secondary stage students in Menouf Secondary School for Boys during the second semester of the academic year 2004/2005, the results indicated that 34 out of 40 students obtained very low scores on a reading comprehension test which consisted of five referential and five inferential questions. The results of this pilot study also showed that first-year secondary stage students had reading comprehension problems in the following areas:

1. identifying referents,
2. identifying antecedents of anaphora,
3. identifying the relationship of each sentence to its predecessor in the text,
4. identifying relationships between and among paragraphs in the text,
5. identifying the logical connection between ideas in the text,
6. inferring the author's purpose for writing the text,
7. inferring the main idea that is not explicitly stated in the text,

8. inferring the author's attitude, tone and bias within the text,
9. inferring the author's assumptions that are not explicitly stated in the text, and
10. drawing logical conclusions from the text.

A major cause of Egyptian secondary stage students' poor comprehension skills is that EFL teachers spend most of the instruction time assessing reading at the word and sentence levels rather than teaching referential or inferential comprehension. Another cause may be students' lack of reading comprehension strategies. As Thompson (1993) states, problems in comprehension could be a result of the lack of instruction in reading comprehension strategies.

In searching for a solution to students' poor comprehension skills all over the world, many researchers (e.g., Bongratz, et al., 2002; Cramer, Fate and Lueders, 2001; Song, 1998) found that reading strategies are beneficial in helping poor readers improve their comprehension skills. Therefore, this study attempted to build students' comprehension strategies through the implementation of the Directed Reading-Thinking Activity (DR-TA) for teaching reading comprehension.

Statement of the Problem

The problem of this study was that Egyptian first-year secondary stage EFL students exhibited low referential and inferential reading comprehension. In an attempt to find a solution to this problem, this study investigated the effects the DR-TA on their referential and inferential reading comprehension.

Research Hypotheses

This study aimed at testing the following hypotheses:

1. There would be no statistically significant difference ($\alpha \leq 0.05$) in the first-year secondary stage EFL students' referential reading comprehension between the experimental group exposed to the DR-TA and the control group exposed to the conventional method.
2. There would be no statistically significant difference ($\alpha \leq 0.05$) in the first-year secondary stage EFL students' inferential reading comprehension between the experimental group exposed to the DR-TA and the control group exposed to the conventional method.

Significance of the Study:

The significance of this study lies in the exploration and verification of an avenue for improving secondary stage EFL students' referential and inferential reading comprehension to enable them to deal wisely with information in the Information Age.

Operational Definition of Terms

The terms below, wherever seen, have the following definitions:

Directed Reading-Thinking Activity: For the present study, the DR-TA is defined operationally as a reading strategy which consists of the following six steps:

1. The teacher writes the title of the reading passage on the board and asks students to read it,
2. The teacher asks students to make predictions about the title using these questions:

- a. What do you think a passage with a title like this might be about?
 - b. Why do you think so?
3. The teacher lists predictions on the board and initiates a discussion with the students by asking them to respond to the following questions:
 - a. Which of these predictions do you think would be the likely one?
 - b. Why do you think this prediction is a good one?
4. The teacher invites students to work in small groups to complete the discussion following the same format.
5. The teacher asks students to read the passage silently and to confirm or reject their own predictions. Then he asks them the following questions:
 - a. Were you correct?
 - b. What do you think now?
 - c. Why do you think so?
6. The teacher asks students to reflect on their predictions through responding to the following questions:
 - a. What prediction did you make?
 - b. What made you think of this prediction?
 - c. What in the passage supports this prediction?
 - d. Do you still agree with this prediction? Why?

Referential comprehension: For the present study, referential comprehension refers to understanding the cohesive relationships among words, sentences, paragraphs and the whole text.

Inferential comprehension: refers to what the reader infers from the text. It includes inferring the main idea and additional details not explicitly stated in the text, inferring the author's purpose for writing the text, drawing logical conclusions from the text, etc.

Conventional method: For the present study, the conventional method refers to the method in which the teacher reads the text aloud and explains the difficult words while reading. After reading, he asks students to respond to literal questions that can be directly and explicitly answered from the text.

Limitations of the Study

The findings of this study are limited by the following:

1. All the subjects of the study were chosen from Menouf Secondary School for Boys, Menoufya Directorate of Education, Egypt.
2. The materials for the study were confined to the reading materials introduced in the Student's Book (*Hello! 6*).

Review of Related Literature

This section is divided into two parts. The first part is devoted to the theoretical literature on the Directed Reading-Thinking Activity, whereas the second part is devoted to the experimental studies that were conducted on this strategy.

Theoretical Literature

Much information has been written about the Directed Reading-Thinking Activity and its importance for improving reading comprehension in general. According to Tierney, Readence and Dishner (1995), the DR-TA is a strategy for building independent readers. They add that this strategy has the potential to equip readers with the abilities to determine purposes for reading, examine reading materials based on these purposes, suspend judgments and make decisions based upon information gleaned from the text.

Similarly, Richardson and Morgan (1997) state that the DR-TA engages students in higher order thinking skills and that these skills include making connections between interrelated elements of the text, justifying thought processes and drawing logical conclusions. They maintain that these skills can set the pathway toward independent reading, foster learner responsibility and improve reading comprehension.

Likewise, Jennings and Shepherd (1998) state that the DR-TA helps students become aware of the reading strategies, understand the reading process, and develop prediction skills. They add that this strategy stimulates students' thinking and makes them listen to the opinions of others and modify their own in light of additional information.

By the same token, El-Koumy (2004) states that the DR-TA engages students in thinking about what they read in three phases. In the first phase, students generate predictions about what they are going to read based on the title of the text. In the second phase, they read to confirm or reject their predictions. In the third phase, they evaluate their predictions using information from the text to support their opinions. He maintains that this strategic process can develop students' reading comprehension skills as well as their higher-order thinking skills.

Along with the same lines, Tankersley (2005) states that the DR-TA extends reading to higher-order thought processes and provides teachers with a great deal about each student's ideas, thought processes, prior knowledge and thinking skills. Moreover, it is useful for processing all types of text.

Furthermore, AbiSamra (2006) states that the DR-TA is an effective strategy for teaching reading comprehension because it helps students set reading purposes by making predictions, read more actively and enthusiastically, and remember more information from what they have read.

Experimental Literature

A review of research related to the DR-TA revealed that all the experimental studies conducted on this strategy, except three (Almanza, 1997; Bauman, Russell and Jones, 1992; Draheim, 1988), used it as part of a package of strategies rather than an individual strategy. Stauffer, the father of the DR-TA, and Hammond (1969) conducted large-scale quantitative studies into the effectiveness of the language experience approach which involved the DR-TA in addition to extensive reading and writing of materials related to students' experiences. Findings of their studies indicated that the language experience approach was effective in improving the reading comprehension of students in the primary grades.

Draheim (1988) investigated the effects of the DR-TA, mapping, DR-TA plus mapping, and reading and underlining the main ideas on freshmen composition students' recall and use of main and subordinate ideas in analytical essays about reading texts. Results indicated that students who used the DR-TA plus mapping and those who read and underlined could recall significantly more ideas than students in the other conditions.

Bauman, Russell and Jones (1992) examined the effects of the think aloud strategy on the reading comprehension of fourth grade students.

Although the focus of their study was on using the think aloud strategy, the experimental design included a comparison group using the DR-TA and a control group that was taught via the Directed Reading Activity (DRA). Results of the study indicated that both the think aloud and the DR-TA strategies were better at increasing students' reading comprehension skills than the DRA strategy. However, the data were not conclusive regarding the most effective strategy. On some measures students in the think aloud group had greater comprehension skills while on other measures students in the DR-TA group had better comprehension skills.

Sears, Carpenter and Burstein (1994) used the DR-TA simultaneously with summarizing, questioning and clarifying strategies, and investigated their effect on the reading comprehension of eighth graders with special needs. Results showed a measurable gain on word recognition and reading comprehension.

Tancock (1994) used the DR-TA in combination with prereading activities such as generating questions and postreading activities such as clarifying, and investigated their effect on the reading comprehension of children with reading problems. Results revealed that there was significant improvement in their reading skills.

Almanza (1997) compared the effectiveness of cooperative learning in small groups during reading to the DR-TA. The subjects for the study were 53 sixth graders with reading problems from two classes in Brooklyn, New York. All these subjects worked in small groups for 4 weeks and used the DR-TA for other 4 weeks. All of them were tested after each 4 weeks.

Results indicated that cooperative learning improved the reading comprehension of the majority of students more than the DR-TA.

Fabrikant, Siekierski and Williams (1999) used the DR-TA in combination with brainstorming of prior knowledge, QAR, self-monitoring questions and literature circles, and investigated their effect on the reading comprehension skills of third, fourth and fifth grade students who had poor literal and inferential comprehension skills. Results indicated that this package of strategies improved students' intrinsic motivation to read as well as their literal and inferential reading comprehension skills.

DeFoe (1999) used the DR-TA in combination with Science Research Associates (SRA) activities, Question Answer Relationship (QAR) strategy, analogy and cooperative learning; and investigated their effect on the reading comprehension skills of middle-grade students who frequently failed to make passing scores in reading comprehension exercises. The analysis of the collected data revealed that students' reading comprehension improved, but not significantly.

Schorzman and Cheek (2004) investigated the effect of the DR-TA in combination with pre-reading plan and graphic organizers. Three middle school teachers in one school used a combination of these strategies to teach reading and the results were compared to a control group of three other teachers at a different middle school. Findings indicated that this package of strategies resulted in significant pre-post student gains on a cloze test but not on a standardized reading test.

To conclude this section, it can be said that although language teaching theoreticians stress the importance of the DR-TA as an individual strategy for developing reading comprehension levels, the experimental studies conducted on this strategy alone are modest and their findings are mixed and inconclusive. This indicates that there is no practical evidence to speak with confidence about the effectiveness of this strategy in improving comprehension levels. Therefore, the need for more research studies in this area seems appropriate.

Methodology

This section discusses the methodology which the researcher followed in the present study. It includes research design, subjects, instrument, materials, variables and procedures of the study.

Research Design

This study utilized a pretest-posttest control group experimental design. In this design the researcher used an experimental group and a control group. The subjects of the study were randomly assigned to these groups by flipping a coin. Both groups were pre-tested to measure their referential and inferential reading comprehension before conducting the experiment. During the experiment, the experimental group students were exposed to the DR-TA, whereas the control group students were exposed to the conventional method of teaching reading comprehension. After treatment, the two groups were post-tested to investigate any significant differences in their referential and inferential reading comprehension. The obtained data were analyzed using the Multivariate Analysis of Variance (MANOVA) and the T-test.

Subjects of the Study

The subjects of the study consisted of 72 first-year secondary students in Menouf Secondary School for Boys at Menoufya Directorate of Education (Egypt) during the academic year 2005/2006. These subjects were randomly assigned to an experimental group and a control group. Almost all of them were 16 years old. They were also similar regarding their economic and social conditions.

Instrument of the Study

To achieve the aim of the study, the researcher developed a reading comprehension test to measure students' referential and inferential reading comprehension before and after conducting the experiment. This test consisted of ten reading comprehension questions about a fairy tale taken from Grimm's fairy tales @ <http://en.wikisource.org/>. Five of these questions were referential and the other five were inferential. The five referential questions involved: (1) identifying the antecedent of a personal pronoun, (2) identifying the antecedent of a relative pronoun, (3) identifying the relationship between the clauses of a compound sentence in the tale, (4) identifying the relationship between a paragraph and its predecessor in the tale, and (5) identifying the sequence of actions in the tale. The five inferential questions involved: (1) inferring the implied main idea in the tale, (2) inferring similarities between two characters in the tale, (3) inferring the author's purpose for writing the tale, (4) inferring the author's tone within the tale, and (5) drawing a logical conclusion from the tale (see Appendix).

To ensure the validity of the reading comprehension achievement test, a jury of two EFL supervisors and two university professors was consulted,

and their comments were taken into consideration before editing the final copy of this test. To ensure its reliability, the test was administered to a sample of twenty first-year secondary students out of the sample of the study and readministered sixteen days later to the same sample to investigate its stability over time. The Pearson correlation coefficient between the scores of the two administrations was 0.81 which indicated that the test was stable over time.

Materials for the Study

The instructional materials for the study consisted of sixteen reading passages. These reading passages were taken from the Student's Book (*Hello! 6*). All these passages were taught to the experimental group using the Directed Reading-Thinking Activity and to the control group using the conventional method.

Variables of the Study

1. Independent variables:
 - a. Directed Reading-Thinking Activity
 - b. Conventional teaching method
2. Dependent variables:
 - a. Referential reading comprehension
 - b. Inferential reading comprehension

Procedures of the Study

The following procedures were followed for the purpose of collecting data for the study:

1. Choosing the subjects for the study from Menouf Secondary School for Boys,
2. Getting the approval of Menoufya Directorate of Education to conduct the experiment.
3. Pre-testing the experimental group and the control group, in the last week of September of the scholastic year 2005/2006, to measure their referential and inferential reading comprehension before conducting the experiment. The results of the analysis of the pre-test scores are shown in table (1).

Table (1)

Results of the MANOVA for Referential and Inferential Reading Comprehension on the Pre-test

Source	Dependent Variables	Sum of Squares	DF	Mean Square	F
Group	REF	0.18	1	0.18	0.04
	INF	0.16	1	0.16	0.03
Error	REF	321.69	70	4.59	
	INF	362.06	70	5.17	
Corrected	REF	392.32	71		
Total	INF	361.41	71		

Table (1) shows that the F value for referential comprehension was 0.04 and for inferential comprehension was 0.03. These values were not

significant at the 0.05 level. This indicated that the two groups were equivalent in both referential and inferential reading comprehension before conducting the experiment.

4. Training the volunteer teacher in implementing the Directed Reading-Thinking Activity.
5. Introducing the DR-TA strategy to the experimental group students through a demonstration lesson that moved from teacher modeling to guided practice and finally to independent practice so that they could use the strategy independently.
6. Conducting the experiment from the beginning of October until the mid of February during the academic year 2005/2006 and visiting the volunteer teacher regularly to help him overcome any difficulties that might appear during the experiment.
7. Post-testing the experimental group and the control group on February 15, 2006 to measure their referential and inferential reading comprehension after treatment.
8. Analyzing the data of this study using the Multivariate Analysis of Variance (MANOVA) and the T-test.

Findings and Discussion

The results of the analysis of the post-test scores are shown in table (2) below.

Table (2)
Results of the MANOVA for Referential and Inferential Reading
Comprehension on the Post-test

Source	Dependent Variables	Sum of Squares	DF	Mean Square	F
Group	REF	18.57	1	18.57	4.89
	INF	35.17	1	35.17	8.73
Error	REF	266.229	70	3.80	
	INF	282.05	70	4.03	
Corrected Total	REF	336.346	71		
	INF	287.656	71		

Table (2) shows that the F value for referential comprehension was 4.89 and for inferential comprehension was 8.73. These values were significant at the 0.05 level. Therefore, the t-test was used to determine the significance of the differences in the mean scores between the experimental group and the control group for both referential and inferential comprehension. The results are shown in tables 3 and 4.

Table (3)

The T-Value of the Difference in the Mean Scores between the Experimental group and the Control Group for Referential comprehension

Group	N	M	SD	DF	T
Experimental	36	6.64	1.60	70	2.29
Control	36	5.55	2.33		

Table (3) shows that the mean of the experimental group's referential comprehension scores was 6.64 with a standard deviation of 1.60 but the mean of the control group's referential comprehension scores was 5.55 with a standard deviation of 2.33. Table (3) also shows that the difference in the mean scores between the experimental group and the control group was statistically significant ($t = 2.29$, $p < 0.05$). Therefore, the first hypothesis of the study was rejected. This finding can be attributed to the fact that the DR-TA encompasses a whole range of referential comprehension processes. It required each student to link the content of each reading passage to his prior knowledge by making predictions about its title, to justify his predictions, to listen to the opinions of other students and modify his own in light of additional information, and to find evidence in the passage to support his predictions, all of which could help him recognize the cohesive ties and referential relationships within the text and between the text and his own prior knowledge, which could ultimately improve his referential comprehension skills.

Table (4)

The T-Value of the Difference in the Mean Scores between the Experimental group and the Control Group for Inferential comprehension

Group	N	M	SD	DF	T
Experimental	36	6.84	1.67	70	3.11
Control	36	5.42	3.13		

Table (4) shows that the mean of the experimental group's inferential comprehension scores was 6.84 with a standard deviation of 1.67 while the control group's mean score was 5.42 with a standard deviation of 3.13. Table (4) also shows that the difference in the mean scores between the experimental group and the control group was statistically significant ($t=3.11, p < 0.05$). Therefore, the second hypothesis of the study was rejected. This finding may be attributed to the following reasons:

- 1, The DR-TA involved students in setting purposes for reading by making predictions about the text. This could activate their prior knowledge, keep them engaged in the text, help them regulate their reading-thinking process, make them compare their own thinking with that of the author, and ultimately improve their inferential comprehension skills. In support of this, Billmeyer and Barton (1998) state that making predictions about the text can help improve students' inferential comprehension and clear up any misconceptions about the topic. Almasi (2003) asserts that making predictions helps students focus their attention on the text and encourages them to think as they read. Moreover, Smith (1994) asserts that prediction is the core of reading comprehension because it brings potential meaning to the text, reduces ambiguity and eliminates irrelevant alternatives in

advance. He maintains that prediction and comprehension are tied together because comprehension, basically, is the absence of confusion. Research also showed that prediction-generation improved the comprehension abilities of low-achieving readers. Hunt and Joseph (1990), for example, compared the effectiveness of teacher-questioning and prediction-generation as methods of improving the reading comprehension abilities of low-achieving readers. They found a significant difference between the two methods in reading comprehension, with prediction-generation demonstrating superior results. Also, in support of this interpretation, Carr and Thompson (1996) found that prior knowledge activation had a positive effect on the inferential reading comprehension of children with and without learning disabilities. Moreover, research indicated that good readers make predictions and verify or refute them as they read (Duke and Pearson, 2001).

2. Students might have enjoyed making predictions and acting as detectives to see if their predictions were correct or not. This could develop their motivation towards reading and ultimately improve their inferential comprehension.
3. Supporting predictions with solid evidence from the text might have built on students' knowledge base, which is the foundation of their thinking, and cleared up their misconceptions, which get in the way of inferential thinking.
4. The teacher's role in the DR-TA was that of an agitator. He guided students' thinking by asking thoughtful questions such as "What do you think? "And why do you think so?" This role could stimulate students' inferential thinking, encourage them to explore issues and ideas between

and beyond the lines of the text, and ultimately improve their higher-order thinking skills. In support of this interpretation, Rusnak (1983) found that there was a relationship between the levels of teachers' questions and the levels of students' thinking during the DRA and DR-TA activities and that when teachers asked factual questions they received significantly more students' responses representing noncritical thinking and when they asked interpreting questions they received significantly more students' responses representing critical thinking. Also, in support of this interpretation, Barron (1990) found that the DR-TA improved third-grade students' higher-order thinking skills.

5. The DR-TA used in the study encouraged collaborative thinking because each student discussed his predictions in a group. In group discussions, students listened to different opinions and interpretations; therefore, their inferential thinking skills were developed. In support of this interpretation, Gokhale (1995) found that collaborative learning helped undergraduate students in industrial technology learn from each other's ideas and fostered the development of their thinking skills.
6. The DR-TA also encouraged independent thinking because each student made predictions and tested them throughout reading. This could in turn enrich and extend students' inferential thinking skills.
7. Accepting each student's predictions in the DR-TA, even those that would later prove to be inaccurate, could create a classroom climate that was open and conducive to inferential thinking. In this climate, students were free to state their own ideas and share their own thinking processes, and thus became inferential thinkers. Furthermore, this respect for each student's opinions could build students' self-esteem, help them achieve a

sense of self-efficacy and encourage them to take risks, all of which could get and keep them actively engaged in higher-order thinking.

Conclusions, Recommendations and Suggestions for Further Research

Conclusions

In light of the results of the study, the researcher can conclude that: (1) The teaching of reading at the literal level does not help students develop referential or inferential comprehension, (2) The development of referential and inferential comprehension skills can only result from using a strategy which forces students to apply these skills while reading, (3) The DR-TA strategy is an effective strategy for developing both referential and inferential comprehension skills. However, these conclusions are limited by the participants' level, the length of the study and the operationalization of the dependent and independent variables of the study.

Recommendations

In light of the results of the study, the researcher recommends that: (1) The goal of developing reading comprehension should go hand-in-hand with the goal of developing thinking skills; (2) The DR-TA strategy should be used for teaching reading comprehension from the outset of instruction; (3) For the DR-TA to be effective, the teacher should stimulate students' thinking, engage them in discussing what they predict and lead them without dominating the discussion; (4) Success with the DR-TA does not come immediately, but the effort is well worth it for any teacher who wants to develop thinking readers.

Suggestions for Further Research

Building on the present study, future researchers are recommended to:

- (1) investigate the effect of collaborative versus individualistic DR-TA on EFL students' comprehension and their attitudes towards reading,
- (2) investigate the effect of cooperative versus competitive DR-TA on EFL students' comprehension and their attitudes towards reading,
- (3) investigate the relationship between reading comprehension and thinking skills,
- (4) investigate the relationship between referential and inferential reading comprehension, and
- (5) investigate the effect of the DL-TA (Directed Listening-Thinking Activity) on EFL students' listening comprehension.

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Appendix

The Referential/Inferential Reading Comprehension Test

Time: 40 minutes

Name:-----.

Class:-----.

Read the following tale and answer the questions:

There was once a very old man, whose eyes had become dim, his ears dull of hearing, his knees trembled, and when he sat at table he could hardly hold the spoon, and spilt the broth upon the table-cloth or let it run out of his mouth. His son and his son's wife were disgusted at this, so the old grandfather at last had to sit in the corner behind the stove, and they gave him his food in an earthenware bowl, and not even enough of it. And he used to look towards the table with his eyes full of tears. Once, too, his trembling hands could not hold the bowl, and it fell to the ground and broke. The young wife scolded him, but he said nothing and only sighed. Then they brought him a wooden bowl for a few half-pence, out of which he had to eat.

They were once sitting thus when the little grandson of four years old began to gather together some bits of wood upon the ground. 'What are you doing there?' asked the father. 'I am making a little trough,' answered the child, 'for father and mother to eat out of when I am big.'

The man and his wife looked at each other for a while, and presently began to cry. Then they took the old grandfather to the table, and henceforth always let him eat with them, and likewise said nothing if he did spill a little of anything.

I. Choose the correct answer from (a), (b), or (c):

(1) The authors in this tale are -----.

(a) cheerful

(b) critical

(c) sarcastic

(2) The authors' purpose for writing this tale is to -----.

(a) entertain the reader

(b) persuade the reader

(c) convey a moral message to the reader

(3) The last paragraph in the tale -----.

(a) states a cause of the effect stated in the paragraph preceding it.

(b) explains the paragraph preceding it.

(c) gives an effect of a cause stated in the paragraph preceding it.

(4) The two clauses in the fifth sentence in the first paragraph express a relationship of -----.

(a) purpose

(b) condition

(c) contradiction

(5) Arrange the following events in sequence as they happened in the tale:

(a) They made him sit in the corner behind the stove and gave him his food in an earthenware bowl.

(b) His son and his son's wife treated him badly.

- (c) As a result, they changed their treatment of the old man and let him eat with them.
- (d) Therefore, they bought him a wooden bowl.
- (e) There was once a very old man who had many health problems.
- (f) The bowl fell to the ground and broke.
- (g) They once saw their little child creating something for them to eat out of in their old age.

II. Answer the following questions:

(6) What does the word “it” in the sixth line in the first paragraph refer to?

.....

(7) What does the word “which” in last line in the first paragraph refer to?”

.....

(8) What are the similarities between the grandson and his wife?

.....

.....

(9) Give a suitable title for this tale.

.....

(10) What can be deduced from this tale?

.....

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About the Author

Abdel Salam A. El-Koumy is a full professor of curriculum and instruction of English as a foreign language at Suez Faculty of Education, Suez Canal University, Egypt. He is also the vice-dean for graduate studies and research at the same faculty. He has published numerous papers on the ERIC Web site at <http://www.eric.ed.gov> and four books on teaching and learning English as a foreign language. He also presented two papers at the International TESOL Convention (1996, 2002) and six papers at the EFL Skills Conference held annually at the American University in Cairo (1994, 1996, 1997, 2001, 2003, 2005). He received post-doctoral training at the University of Mississippi and California State University. His special interests include integrating assessment and instruction, integrating thinking skills into language skills instruction, and integrating "whole-language" with "skill-based" instruction. He can be reached by e-mail at: elkoumya@yahoo.com