Text Reconstruction

Objective: This activity aims at providing students with an opportunity to practice and develop their reading skills, as well as to interact and work as a group.

Materials: Any text that the teacher believes will be motivating and interesting to students. I have tried this activity several times and I believe it works better with passages from romances or novels, because they are more creative and imaginative.

Procedure:

A- Before the class:

Select the passage you want to be reconstructed and make copies of it. After you’ve done that divide the passage by the number of students you have in your class, and then cut the text up in small pieces. It is also possible to pair students up and have them work on only one piece of the text (instead of working individually on different pieces). This will allow students to interact even more during the activity. It would also be a good idea to take some dictionaries into the classroom. They could be used in case students have problems in guessing the meaning of the new words from the context.

It is also important to come up with some pre-reading questions to ask the students, so they can get more interested and motivated to perform the activity. For instance, if you have selected a short story that describes life in the future you could start by asking the students what their life will be like 30 years from now. You might even show a few minutes of a movie that explores this subject (The fifth element), and only after this propose the activity for the students.

B- During the class:

After you have asked the students all the pre-reading questions you should give each one of them a piece of the text (see part A for suggestion for pair work). If students cannot guess the meaning of a new word from the context they are free to use a dictionary. Since one of the goals of this activity is developing skills and strategies it is important that the teacher let the students perform the entire task by themselves.

After they have read and understood their part they should summarize it to the class using his/her own words. The class, as a group will reconstruct the text so it returns to its original sequence. After they have finished, the teacher may hand in the original text and discuss it with the group.