

UNIT 2 LEARNING AND TEACHING MODERN FOREIGN LANGUAGE SKILLS

2.3 DEVELOPING READING SKILLS

Reading plays an essential role in CLIL classes. Unfortunately students do not automatically transfer the strategies they use when reading in their native language to reading in a foreign language. For most of them reading in a foreign language means starting at the beginning and going word by word, stopping to look up every unknown word, until they reach the end. CLIL teachers, just like language teachers, have to help students realise that it is not always necessary to read and understand every word in a text and have to enable them to transfer the strategies they use unconsciously in their native language to reading in a foreign language.

The four major types of reading skills used in every language play an important role in CLIL classes too; they are skimming, scanning, intensive and extensive reading.

Skimming means reading a text quickly for gist, to identify the topic and main ideas of a text. This technique has to be used in CLIL classes since it helps students get an idea of any kind of text they are about to read.

Scanning means reading quickly to find specific information. For instance in CLIL classes students can scan to locate statements, definitions, formulas which must be remembered completely and precisely. They can scan to find the exact and complete statement of a chemical law, the formula of a particular compound in chemistry, to find dates in a historical text etc.

Intensive reading means reading a short text to find detailed information. This kind of reading can be used in CLIL classes when it is necessary an accurate understanding of a text.

Extensive reading means reading a longer text with emphasis on global understanding. For example CLIL teachers may invite their students to read a book.

In order to develop and improve students' reading skills teachers have to plan lessons that include **pre-reading, while-reading** and **post-reading activities**. The activities of the three stages help students to depend on themselves and on other resources, rather than on teachers, as the main source of information. The final goal is not only to increase reading comprehension but also to develop critical reading skills.