

DEVELOPMENT OF PRE-READING SKILLS OF PRIMARY SCHOOL PUPILS FOR EFFECTIVE INCLUSIVE EDUCATION

Unegbu, Justina I.

Department of Special Education & Rehabilitation Sciences, Unijos.

Abstract

Reading is one of the four language skills, which are the basic for a child. Unless the place of pre-reading skills are recognized in our schools, we will continue to turn out graduates who pass through reading but gain none. Pre-reading activities are most important at lower levels of language in an inclusive classroom setting. In this paper attempt was made to explain the Development of pre-reading skills of primary school pupils for effective inclusive education. The relevance of pre-reading skills for reading development in an inclusive education setting was discussed. Sample pre-reading activities and ways to enhance reading skills by the teacher was discussed.

Introduction

Pre-reading activities includes drawing, labeling and colouring diagrams related to the topic or text. Developing pre-reading skills begins at birth. Graduating to decoding written language take years and plenty of practice, but many daily activities such as doing simple puzzles, singing songs, drawing, telling jokes, sharing stories and pretending to read a book to a doll or teddy bear. The Reading Rockets Website, cites many ways to note the development of pre-reading skills among children in an inclusive settings. Engaging in word play such as chanting nursery rhymes, demonstrates phonological awareness or recognizing individual sounds within words. This paper buttresses the issues of the reading skills and its relevance for reading development in an inclusive education setting and the activities that will enhance reading skills for teachers.

Pre-Reading Skills and its Relevance for Reading Development in an Inclusive Education Setting

Pre-reading skills provides an overview that can increase reading speed and efficiency in typical inclusive education setting. Some of its relevance for reading development in an inclusive education settings include:

- **Families visions of a typical life for their children can come true.**

All parents want their children to be accepted by their peers, have friends and local regular lives. Ipadeola and James (2007) state that the idea of bringing all children especially the school age children together in one environment to learn, either with a view to eliminate discrimination, reduce cost or to give the special needs children a sense of belonging is a mirage.

- **Children develop a positive understanding of themselves and others.**
Andzayi (2002) state that reading is acquiring experience through the knowledge of what other people have been through and have written down, which will help them to develop their own vocabularies. When children attend classes that reflect the similarities and differences of people in the real world they learn to appreciate diversity. Hence, respect and understanding grow when children of differing abilities and cultures play and learn together under the same instruction.
- **Friendships develops.**
Schools are important places for children to develop friendships and learn some skills from each other in inclusive classes.
- **Children learn important academic skills.**
Pre-reading skills enable children to learn to read, write and do mathematical problems with high expectations and good instruction in inclusive classrooms in order to achieve academic skills.
- **All children learn by being together.**
Because the philosophy of inclusive education is aimed at helping all children learn, everyone in the class benefits. Children learn at their own pace and style within a nurturing learning environment. This is supported by Ozoji (2005) that inclusive classroom programme is geared towards providing quality education for children in a restructured school setting. The National Centre on Educational restructuring and inclusion opine that the need to provide all students with equitable opportunities to receive effective educational services, acquiring the knowledge of pre-reading activities that will enhance reading, support services could be achieved through inclusion.

Developing Reading Activities

Developing reading activities involves more than identifying a text that is at the right level, writing a set of comprehension questions for students to answer after reading, handing out the assignment and sending students away to do it. According to National Capital language Resource Centre (2004), states that a fully-developed reading activity supports students as readers through pre-reading, while-reading, and post-reading activities. This reading activities should be success oriented and build up students confidence in their reading ability. It should also:

1. Construct the reading activity around a purpose that has significance for the students. Making sure that students understand what the purpose for reading is, to get main idea, obtain specific information, understand most or all of the message.
2. Define the activity's instructional goal and the appropriate type of response. An activity can also have more instructional purposes such as practicing or reviewing specific grammatical constructions, introducing new vocabulary.
3. Check the level of difficulty of the text.

Judging the relative ease or difficulty of a reading text for a particular purpose and a particular group of students with the following questions;

- Does the story line, narrative, or instruction conform to familiar expectations?
- How familiar are the students with the topic? Misapplication of background knowledge due to cultural differences can create major comprehension difficulties.
- Does the text contain redundancy?
- Does the text offer visual support to and in reading comprehension? Visual aids such as photographs, maps, and diagrams help students preview the content of the text, guess the meaning of unknown words and check comprehension while reading.

The Use of Pre-Reading Activities to Prepare Students for Reading in An Inclusive Setting

Pre-reading activities are most important at lower levels of language proficiency and at earlier stages of reading instruction. As students become more proficient at using reading strategies, you will be able to reduce the amount of guided pre-reading that allow students to do these activities themselves. During pre-reading, there are some activities the teacher uses such as:

- Assess student's background knowledge of the topic and linguistic content of the text.
- Give students the background knowledge necessary for comprehension of the text or activate the already known knowledge that the students possess.
- Clarify any cultural information which may be necessary.
- Students should be made known the type of text they will be reading and the purposes for reading.
- Give room for group works and class discussion activities so that low learners could be helped (National Capital Language Resource Centre (2004)).

Sample Pre-Reading Activities

- Using the title, subtitles and divisions within the text to predict content.
- Looking at pictures, maps, diagrams or graphs and their captions.
- Talking about the author's background, writing style, and usual topics.
- Skimming to find the theme or main idea and eliciting related prior knowledge.
- Reviewing vocabulary or grammatical structures.
- Reading over the comprehension questions to focus attention on finding that information while reading.

The best way to create the desire to read in children is to read interesting books aloud to them even before they can read on their own. This is supported by Umolu and Andzayi (2007) that children, attain readiness to learn to read at different school, they should be

able to talk and listen to before they learn to read. They need a lot of oral language, work in form of stories, discussions and gain to widen their experiences before they could learn to read.

Teacher's Activities to Promote Reading Skills in Children.

The reading programme at pre-school level is generally called reading readiness to distinguish it from formal reading.

Ipadeola (2008) state that classroom activities of school-age children should aimed at promoting reading, generally in building linguistic and cognitive abilities and specifically, in providing functional, recreational and skill building reading experience. All activities should be geared towards promoting memory, give children specific awareness of written symbols, concrete concepts about observable dates, shapes etc. some example of the functional reading are:

Creating awareness of words through children names.

1. Children learn to read their names by repeatedly seeing them on labels, their possession. Teacher should put labels on objects in the classroom.
2. Simple written charts may be used. Dates and days of the week may be written. Teacher raises the sentence each day while children then complete the sentences by using picture and words e.g.

Yesterday was Sunday

Today is Monday

Tomorrow will be Tuesday

3. The attendance charts can be made to consist of pictures of the individual children inserted in slots.
4. Teacher can develop language skills by providing opportunity for pupils to have new experiences through field trips, visiting. It should done purposely so that their ability to recognize differences, similarities, classification would be gained.
5. Teachers through parallel talk, engages the child in meaningful conversation about what he is doing at the movement. He/she uses the opportunity to explain ideas, concept to children as well as encouraging the child to express himself. Aukerman (1981).

Conclusion

Pre-reading education programme provides opportunities for growing children to develop their psychological, emotional cognitive and physical needs at the time of their life. Learning to read is essential for every child. A school age child can learn to read without any bearer. Thus, for any instructional reading programme to be effective, it needs to address the development of skills such as identification, word knowledge and comprehension. The inclusion of school age children in our regular classroom should be viewed as paramount because reading is the bedrock of learning.

References

- Andazayi, C.A. & Umolu, J. (2002). Reading instruction in primary & secondary schools. Jos; Lecaps Pub.
- Aukerman, R.C. (1981). How do I teach reading? John Wiley & Son Inc; U.S.A.
- Ipadeola, M.A. & James, A.C. (2007). Inclusive education and the congenitally profoundly deaf in primary school. *Journal of advocacy and rehabilitation in special education* (5), 1. 101.
- Ipadeola, M.H. (2008). Teaching reading to deaf children: A new direction towards ensuring the success of universal basic education (UBE), under the educational sector reform. *The journal of the national council for exceptional children*. 10, (1) 14.
- National Capital language Resource Centre (2004). Developing reading activities; Washington, D.C
- Ozaji, E.D. (2005). Special needs education and Rehabilitation for beginner professionals (2nd edition). Jos: Dekapub.