

Becoming a Reader: Key Considerations

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ABSTRACT Reading is a skill that should be properly mastered for one to be able to become a reader. For learners to become readers, they need to follow all processes that are considered critical for reading. Reading involves coming into contact with the text and be able to understand the message brought about by those texts. Therefore, this paper aims to explore key considerations that should be taken into account when learning to read in order to become a reader. The paper offers a synopsis of key considerations as far as reading with understanding is concerned. The researcher further cross-examines key considerations that should be comprehended in order to become a reader.

INTRODUCTION

“Reading is described as a form of human behaviour namely interpretation behaviour” (Oosthuizen 1989: 317). In order to become a reader, one needs to take into consideration key aspects of reading. The extent to which the learner is able to read is influenced by collaborations between personal and environmental conditions. Reading can be described as the practise of viewing at, and understanding the connotation of written as well as printed words of the illustration interpretation of characters. Reading engages identification and occasionally the articulation of the symbols, which epitomize sounds in an individual communication. Reading has much to do with learner being able to comprehend anything that has been written. For this reason, comprehension is regarded as the core of reading. Reading makes possible the teaching and learning procedure and has protected the human race over the years. It is a method requiring the utilisation of complex thought procedures to translate printed symbols as meaningful units, and to understand them as thought units so as to understand the printed message (Aina et al. 2011). In this paper the descriptive research method is used. Data

were gathered from different documents like for example, databases, the internet, books, theses, journals, magazines and newspapers.

The Definition of Reading

Torgesen et al. (2007: 1) wrote: “...reading proficiency at the end of elementary school requires that students be able to identify the words on the page accurately and fluently; that they have enough knowledge and thinking ability to understand the words, sentences, and paragraphs, and that they be motivated and engaged enough to use their knowledge and thinking ability to understand and to learn from the text. We want to emphasise that motivation to understand and learn from text is a critical component of reading comprehension...”

Key Considerations in Becoming a Reader

“Reader development has the potential to create the environment, to give the opportunity and to present the range of elements that can entice the reader, and draw him or her to the reading experience. Reader development is not prescriptive, and to suggest that he or she manipulates the reader in any way, rather than their personal intervention could make the fiction collection more relevant and more accessible to an interested reader” (Van Riel in Elkin et al. 2003: 34).

To become a reader is a constant practice that starts with the improvement of spoken language expertise and head to self-regulated reading. The spoken language, which is the aptitude

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to communicate and to pay attention, is of paramount importance in forming the basis for successful reading. Normally, children learn the language used in their families through perceptions, pay attention, communication as well as interaction with adults and other kids in their surroundings. This procedure occurs obviously and probably in nearly all the instances (Ministry of Education of Ontario 2003).

Stages of Reading Development

There are different stages of reading development that children go through when they acquire reading. These stages are the pre-reading stage, beginning reading stage as well as the fluency stage.

Pre-reading Stage

The pre-reading stage is a stage during which children impersonate the reading procedure without truly reading. The children start to comprehend what reading is concerned with and how it functions. The children also become aware of the fact that verbal words can also be written down and be read by other people (Adams 1990).

The Beginning Reading Stage

The beginning reading stage is concerned with children acquiring reading to consider the particulars of the print as well as how the printed expressions and literatures symbolize the sounds and words of spoken language. During this stage, children require to comprehend how the sounds of the language plan on top of the letters. Teachers need to comprehend what is difficult concerning the character arrangement, and exhibit this in a modest method so as to assist children to get over this stage (Adams 1990).

The Fluency Stage

The fluency stage is the stage in which a child is now capable of recognising words with more expertise and no difficulty, and be able to read with an improved understanding. The children require more chances to read books that are knowable, attractive and stimulating so that they will be able to read words fast and without struggling. With more reading exercises, chil-

dren grow the ability of fluency that permits them to read with improved amusement and comprehension (Allington 1983).

For learners to acquire learning, teachers have an important role to play in encouraging learners to read. They must inspire love for reading by making use of attractive and interesting books that children can be able to visualise, perceive and grasp. The speed of a learner to learn reading can be influenced by the following elements:

“Exposure to rich language environment in the pre-school years, with plenty story-telling, conversation, books and encouragement to ask and answer questions.

The quality and quantity of reading instruction in the early school years.

Focused early intervention for those who are at risk of reading failure.

On-going support from the family and community” (Allington 1983).

The learner’s visual, auditory and cognitive right mind which marks reading to be alive, and an active experience is activated by active teaching. An effective classroom schedule will incorporate “direct and systematic instruction, modelling and coaching, frequent practice with a variety of texts, on-going assessment, timely feedback, and opportunities to celebrate successes.” Children will learn means of utilising their developing knowledge and skills adaptably and in combination by appealing actively to the reading procedure (Allington 1983).

Strong Basis for Reading

The pre-school level is the finest period for children to start acquiring reading while they are still of tender age. They can start learning from home, at the day-care in the preschool programme and at the kindergarten. They learn more if they are given a chance to be involved in focused oral linguistic and early print activities such as the following:

- Perceiving others while they are reading.
- Appreciating and sharing various reading materials that are read aloud by their peers.
- Feeling and fantasizing to read anticipated and acquainted books, alphabet books, poems, rhymes, etc.
- Performing out narratives, repeating accustomed tales, as well as whistling melodies.

- Partaking in practices with grown-ups and speaking concerning those understandings.
- Perceiving print in the surroundings and linking print with verbal words and their connotation.
- By appreciating the book agreements and perceptions about print such as that there a front and a back in a book.
- Distinguishing that words are composed of resonances, and employing those resonances by means of “rhyming games, sound substitution games, alliterations” etc.
- Constructing new terminology by means of books, familiarities and collaborations (Snow et al. 1998).

Reading is the process whereby meaning is built from the written text. Active initial reading teaching permits learners to develop into fluent readers who are able to understand what they read. They can also employ and transfer their acquaintance and expertise in the existing backgrounds. This also increases their inspiration to read. There are three goals of reading instruction that enable learners to acquire reading, namely: “fluency, comprehension and motivation to read” (Calkins 2001).

Fluency

Fluency is concerned with the ability to identify words accurately and be able to read texts at a fast speed with noble communication. Fluency develops in readers through regular exercise by reading books that are interesting, simple and about the topic that they can relate to. The type of texts should mainly consist of words that are of high occurrence to help children not to come across many words that are not accustomed to. When children improve their fluency, their capability to read extra expressively with appropriate phrasing increases and gain additional meaning of the text (Calkins 2001).

Comprehension

Comprehension has much to do with the ability to understand, to reproduce and to study the text. To ensure that they acquire reading effectively, children should develop the comprehension expertise through active reading instruction which is based on their previous comprehension and knowledge, language abilities as

well as advanced-level of reasoning (Calkins 2001).

“Reading comprehension is the ability to gain meaning from what is read. Reading comprehension requires various reading skills (that is, word recognition, fluency, lexical knowledge, pre-existing knowledge) to be undertaken rapidly so that the reader may gain knowledge from text” (Pressley 2000; Birsch 2011).

Prior Knowledge

It is not yet clear as to whether there are facilitating issues such as functioning memory, motivation, decoding and other things that can obstruct prior knowledge and influence reading comprehension (Sanford 2015). Moreover, prior knowledge is precisely connected to reading comprehension, and therefore a convincing predictor of reading capability (Elbro and Buch-Iversen 2013). Lack of prior knowledge impacts on reading comprehension (Kintsch 2013).

Word Recognition

According to Denton et al. (2011), there is a connection between word identification and reading comprehension, and between oral reading fluency and reading comprehension. The reader should be able to recognise a word in order to build up the vocabulary needed to be able to read. As a result, the ability to recognise words is one of the indications of quantifying individual reading capability. Word recognition should be emphasised in the Foundation Phase because at a secondary school level, emphasis is on teaching reading strategies such as synopsis and discovering major significant conceptions to advance learner understanding (Sanford 2015).

Reading Strategies

According to Tankersley (2003: 95), pre-reading strategies are based on students’ prior knowledge and guessing the content of the text that he/she is going to read where the goal is to make connections between old and new knowledge, introduce new vocabulary, preview or examine the materials in detail, make predictions and help readers set focus. These strategies include the following:

Prediction

Prediction refers to the use of prior knowledge regarding a topic, and combines prior knowledge with latest information in the text. That is, readers utilise what they are knowledgeable about before and associate it to the information at hand. In other words, before reading any passage, readers usually subconsciously ask themselves what they know about the text. This makes it easy to see what information they already know about the time they read the text (May 2010: 17). This can be done by previewing “titles, section headings, and photo captions” to develop a perception of the structure, as well as to guess what the text may be about (Brassell and Rasinski 2008: 95).

Skimming

Skimming is a technique of quickly moving the eyes across the text with the intention of obtaining merely the key concepts as well as a general impression of its subject matter. Skimming can be done through various methods such as reading the title, which gives a summary of the content; reading the leading paragraph; looking at the relationships between subheadings; and reading the first sentence of each paragraph (Kartika 2012).

Scanning

Scanning can be done by looking at the study questions at the end, searching for key words or ideas, looking for definitions, looking for highlighted words and looking for examples, including diagrams (Kartika 2012).

Motivation to Read

Motivation to read is the influence that keeps the children reading. To motivate children to read, they need to be engrossed in a print-rich surrounding with adequate print, rhymes, images, diagrams, etc. that attract their concentration, and influence them to read for enjoyment and for information (Ministry of Education of Ontario 2003).

Moreover, reading can be associated with enjoyment because pupils and students can be encouraged and inspired to read, and as a result to develop the required reading culture through

“storytelling, reading together (shared reading), formation of reading/book clubs as well as provision of conducive reading environment devoid of unwarranted noise and distractions” (Aina et al. 2011). According to Wigfield et al. (2008), reading engagement has much to do with the combined operation of motivational and cognitive processes. Moreover, engagement is considered an important factor in facilitating reading acquisition and particularly, reading comprehension.

Objectives

The objective of this paper is to explore key considerations that need to be taken into account when learning to read to become a reader.

METHODOLOGY

The method used in this paper is descriptive research. This paper was examined by means of systematic literature review whereby a mixture of contextual and conceptual evaluation approaches were used. Data were gathered from different records like for example, databases, the internet, books, theses, journals, magazines and newspapers.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Reading is a complicated and comprehensive activity and a difficult ability because it needs a mixture of concentration, memory, and perceptual and understanding procedures (Demiroz 2010). According Berkeley et al. (2011), there are various reading strategies that can be utilised to teach reading to learners, but there are three effective reading strategies to reading comprehension. These are ‘summarization, prediction and inference’. These strategies are critical while reading, and their absence influences comprehension. It is important that learners use these strategies to analyse and understand what they are reading because they permit striving readers to enthusiastically participate with the text. They therefore aid understanding.

Prior knowledge is concerned with learners’ subject knowledge, which is associated with subject areas such as life sciences, history and mathematics that they previously possessed before formal teaching at school (Gurlitt and Renkl 2010). That is why readers’ prior knowl-

edge is important in improving their understanding as well as their memory. It is also not surprising that prior knowledge is regarded as field or content knowledge that has much to do with improving understanding and memory concerning what has been read (Priebe et al. 2012). Consequently, prior knowledge will possibly improve reading comprehension since the individual's comprehension of the topic may contribute to word recognition.

According to Schroeder (2010), "reading recovery is a research-based, intensive one-on-one intervention programme used effectively around the world to support and to teach struggling six-year old learners by helping them to catch-up with their classmates to read and to write." Therefore, a classroom teacher should know his learners quite well and should easily guide them to right books.

This is consistent with literature that reading can be achieved as an element of a class, in groups, or alone. Moreover, reading individually or in clusters can be made without a sound, as well as in schools. This is generally an element of a curriculum of increased or general reading. Furthermore, Strauss (2008) indicates that maintained reading can involve learners in their learning to read. This commitment leads to inspiration to become a reader. When learners have a zealous appeal in their reading materials, they are able to regularly exceed their normal reading abilities (Worthy 1996). The carefully selected reading resources is of paramount importance. Learners who are not fascinated by the reading matter offered will not be stimulated to read that tests. Learners' pleasure in reading for the sake of reading is important to engage them in reading (Strauss 2008).

Motivation to read is concerned with motivating learners to read. According to Guthrie et al. (2009), the significance of motivation to read cannot be overlooked. Reading motivation goes hand in hand with reading achievement, which is crucial for readers because the main intention for learner reading is to promote lifelong readers. Moreover, "While educators often confirm the importance of motivation, it has often been overlooked in research, theory, practice and teacher education" (Guthrie et al. 2009: 320). Motivation is found in two types, namely: intrinsic as well as extrinsic motivation. With regards intrinsic reading motivation, it has much to do with the significance of reading, which is

concerned with the belief that reading is more indispensable. It has also to do with curiosity, which is concerned with the aspiration to read regarding a specific subject of own fascination. It relates to participation, which has much to do with the amusement of reading particular types of information texts. Finally, it relates to preference for stimulating topics, which is the fulfilment of grasping or integrating complicated concepts in text. On the other hand, extrinsic reading motivation has much to do with commitment in an activity with respect to external benefits and requirements (Clark and Rumbold 2006).

Mckool (2007) cautions teachers and others about extrinsic rewards because learners were found to be reading for the reward and not for the enjoyment of reading itself. On the other hand, intrinsic motivation predicts future motivation for reading, and learners appear more motivated based on their interest in the task rather than the extrinsic reward (West 2014).

CONCLUSION

In this paper the researcher looked at what reading entails and how one can become a reader. The key considerations for becoming a reader were found to be the following: the pre-reading stage, which is a stage during which children impersonate the reading procedure without truly reading. The beginning reading stage is concerned with children acquiring reading to consider the particulars of the print as well as the printed expression. The fluency stage, which is the stage in which learners are now capable of recognising words with more skills and ease. They can also read with a better understanding. The pre-school level, which is the finest period for children to start acquiring reading while they are still of tender age. Prior knowledge is concerned with the learner's subject knowledge, which is associated with the subject area. The reader should be able to recognise the word in order to build the vocabulary needed to be able to read.

RECOMMENDATIONS

There need be very few unfamiliar word in a page for beginner readers, and not exceed five words for learners in the intermediate phase. As a result, educators should essentially present suitable reading resources that learners feel con-

tented with, and encouraged about when they are requested to read. Teachers should also encourage learners to discontinue to read everything that is not stimulating or as soon as they realise that the reading matters is complicated. Learners can select reading resources for themselves from different sources like for example magazines, newspapers and storybooks. They should not have to be confined to the textbooks or reading resources provided by the educator only.

Learners should be encouraged to freely enjoy reading topics of their choice. The teacher only assists when needed. This promotes their reading, thinking and comprehension skills. Assistance and intervention from teachers occur when learners struggle with words or do not understand the meanings of words.

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