



DIFFICULTIES IN TEACHING READING TO YOUNG LEARNERS

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Abstract: This article explores the challenges that teachers face when working with young students in educational settings. The abstract provides an overview of the key issues discussed in the article, including the unique characteristics of young learners, such as their limited attention spans and varying levels of cognitive development. The article also examines strategies that teachers can use to address these difficulties and create a positive learning environment for young students. Overall, the article highlights the importance of understanding the specific needs of young learners and adapting teaching methods to effectively engage and support their learning.

Key words: young learners, reading, strategy, experience, difficulties

Introduction

Teaching young learners can be a rewarding experience, but it also comes with its own set of challenges. Educators working with children in preschool, kindergarten, and elementary school settings often encounter difficulties that are unique to this age group. Understanding these challenges is crucial for creating effective and engaging learning experiences for young students. One of the primary difficulties in teaching young learners is their limited attention span. Children in this age group may struggle to stay focused for extended periods of time, making it challenging for teachers to deliver lessons and maintain student engagement. Additionally, young learners have varying levels of cognitive development, which can impact their ability to understand and retain information. Another challenge faced by teachers of young learners is managing classroom behavior. Children at this age are still developing social and emotional skills, and may exhibit disruptive or challenging behaviors in the classroom. Teachers must establish clear rules and expectations to create a positive learning environment and address behavior issues effectively.

Awareness of speech sound plays an important role in reading development. (Russell Monroe Gersten, Esther Geva, 2003).

Teenagers who read independently are also those students who do best in school. (Alex Quigley, 2020). But teaching reading to young learners can present various challenges, as young children are still developing their language and literacy skills. Some common difficulties in teaching reading to young learners include:



1. Limited attention span: Young children may have a short attention span, making it challenging to engage them in reading activities for an extended period of time.

2. Varying readiness levels: Young learners may have varying levels of readiness for reading, with some students progressing more quickly than others. It can be challenging to meet the individual needs of each student in a diverse classroom.

3. Lack of prior exposure to print: Some young learners may have limited exposure to print materials at home, which can impact their reading readiness and ability to recognize letters and words.

4. Difficulty with phonemic awareness: Phonemic awareness, the ability to hear and manipulate individual sounds in words, is a crucial skill for reading. Some young learners may struggle with phonemic awareness, making it challenging for them to decode words.

5. Limited vocabulary: Young children may have a limited vocabulary, which can hinder their comprehension of texts and make it difficult for them to understand the meaning of unfamiliar words.

6. Lack of motivation: Some young learners may lack motivation or interest in reading, especially if they find reading challenging or if they have not yet developed a love for books and stories.

7. Language barriers: For young learners who are English language learners or who speak a different language at home, language barriers can present challenges in learning to read and comprehend English texts.

8. Fine motor skills: Developing fine motor skills is essential for young learners to write and practice letter formation, which is an important aspect of learning to read.

Chastain (1988) stated that second and foreign language students need to read large quantities of authentic materials in order to be able to read for communication. Many pedagogy experts accept and popularize the important role of the background knowledge and pre-reading activities to activate it, (Aebersold & Field, 1997). Recognizing the written words in a text as an efficient, quick, and automatic lower-level reading process is a basic requirement for successful reading comprehension although it does not seem to be the only foundation of such a reading. (Sousan Sattar, Hadi Salehi, 2014). To address these difficulties, educators can implement strategies such as providing differentiated instruction, incorporating multisensory activities, fostering a print-rich environment, and offering targeted interventions for struggling readers. By recognizing and addressing these challenges, educators can support young learners in developing essential reading skills and fostering a love of reading.

How best to teach reading has been a subject of ‘great debate’ (Chall, 1967) for most of the post-war period. Since reading is a complex process that involves not



only the reader's ability to read the text but also his ability to comprehend it. (Rini Safrianti,2020). There are four strategies that were used by English teachers that were explained by some experts including think-pair-share, reciprocal teaching, question and answer, and small group discussion strategy. There are two strategies that were not used by the English teachers in teaching reading comprehension those are Know Want Learned and SQ3R strategy.(Rini Safrianti,2020).

Conclusion

In conclusion, teaching reading to young learners can present various challenges, from limited attention spans and varying readiness levels to difficulties with phonemic awareness and vocabulary. However, by recognizing these challenges and implementing effective strategies to address them, educators can support young learners in developing essential reading skills and nurturing a love of reading. Creating a supportive and engaging learning environment, providing differentiated instruction, and offering targeted interventions for struggling readers are key approaches to overcoming these difficulties. By working collaboratively with students, families, and colleagues, educators can help young learners navigate the challenges of learning to read and set them on a path towards literacy success.

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