Phonics based reading and decoding assignment

Education

The reading process as a whole is a very multifaceted area, and is relentlessly changing. As a future upcoming school teacher, it is imperative for me to understand the process and theories behind the reading act itself. Therefore, before I started my assignments working with my student, I researched some theories about reading in order to know the reason behind the importance of it. The three theories which I consider are the most essential, and which I feel are disheveled to account for the reading process are sub-skill theories, interactive theories and trans-active theories.

I deem that all three of these theories have mechanisms that fit simultaneously to account for reading and the understanding of reading. One theory alone cannot account for every phase of the reading process. The sub-skill theory reading approach is one that has been around for a long time, (since I was a little girl playing outside eating dirt and making mud pies) and is based on instructional strategies to teach letter-sound relationships, sight words and decoding skills (along side others), until the reading act becomes routine.

Comprehension does play a role in this theory, but in my opinion it played a very small role. I know this system works, because it is the way I was taught to read. I believe it is essential for young children to understand the connection between sound and symbol relationships. This approach gives children a tactic for sounding out words that are unfamiliar to them. Decoding the pronunciation of a word can sometimes lead to the word's meaning, only if the child is familiar with the word. However, the goal of reading is to gain meaning from the text, not just to pronounce the words correctly.

When the reader is unable to attach meaning to the word, the decoding skill becomes useless. Being an employee of a school district and working in the classroom with students, I have witnessed many students who are prolific readers, can sound out even the most difficult words, but do not have an indication about the meaning of what they have read. Studying a reading skill in isolation does not give assurance of its use in practice. This is the point where I believe the interactive theory comes into play.

The interactive theory makes the connection between the reader and the text, and the theory states that the result of this uninterrupted interaction produces meaning. One of the most significant aspects of this theory has to do with the reader making predictions about what they are reading (top down processing) while at the same time, they are using visual cues from the text to test these predictions (bottom down processing). Unlike the sub-skill theory in which there is extreme focus on words and skills are stressed more than meaning, however, the trans-active theory takes it one step further and gives value to the reader.

In this case, the reader uses their background knowledge and experiences to bring meaning to the text. If the reader is unable to relate to the text, they are unable to obtain meaning from it. This is an indispensable characteristic of the reading process, in my opinion. At Rose City Middle School we have learned that good teaching bridges the gap between previously learned knowledge and new material. The reading process is no different- it must link the spaces between the print and the information contained in it to background knowledge.

However, the interactive theory explains this connection, but I believe it leaves out another imperative characteristic of the reading process, and that is the characteristic of the reader's emotion. The trans-active theory is the only theory that includes emotion, which in my opinion, is an essential part of any reading experience. I think it is true that reading stimulates both cognitive and affective aspects, and the reader brings to the reading their own beliefs, values and attitudes. These feelings affect their responses to the reading, and the framework of the text plays a role, too.

The trans-active theory relates to the whole language profile, which I am a vast advocate of, because I think that learner-centered instruction in reading is the most consequential and advantageous way to teach reading to a young child. Instead of skills being taught in isolation, as in the sub-skill theory, with the trans-active theory, skills are entrenched in whole-language reading and writing approach where meaning, comprehension and communication are emphasized. During this approach, the reader may not identify all of the words with the text but not realizing that comprehension was in effect.

Many times, this is true- a reader does not have to read every word in order to obtain meaning. However, the most essential test is whether or not the student recognizes when he/she has read something wrong, and is able to self-correct, and if the student can construe and understand what he/she has read. The trans-active theory takes all of these areas into thought. I believe that all three of these theories have legitimacy in an elementary classroom, as well as a middle school classroom and I know that I will use aspects of all three in my teaching.

I plan to use the sub-skill theory approach because I want reading to become automatic for my students, and I plan to use the interactive and trans-active theories because I want reading to be a pleasurable experience for my students. The trans-active theory will come into play when I select books that will evoke emotion from my students. I think I can best meet the learning needs of my students with a balanced approach, taking the best ideas from all three theories to help my students become independent readers who read fluently, understand what they read and most of all, love what they read.

I was able to use and understand these theories in my lesson assignments for weeks 2, 3, and 4. As you review my week's activities with my student you will see that I was able to understand the meaning of most teaching and learning styles when using the FUNdamentals Action Reading Program. I was able to present my student with the understanding that there is a relationship between phonemes and graphemes, and that letters symbolizes sounds in written language.

Therefore, I was able to help my student focus more on learning the individual sounds that the letters make and then teach her how to arrange the sounds to form a word then read the words. Week 2 I am working with a 6 year old student whose name is K'Mya. My first activity with her was to teach her engine sounds. The " alphabetic principle" was taught in this method. I gave her a card that had pictures and the alphabet letters A-Z. I pronounced the engine sound of the word 3 times then allowed my student to pronounce it with me.

After the engine sound was pronounced and comprehended by my student, I then taught her the whole word and pointed to the pictures as I taught them in which at the this point I was teaching " analytic phonics". I went through the drill a few times with her just listening to me as I made the sounds, then I allowed her to say and point to the picture with me. This activity was done using pictures and the alphabet A-Z until she was comfortable in saying them. I then tested her " fluency" to see how well she learned the engine sounds by making the drills a little faster than the first.

We then played a card game in which at this point " direct instruction" was used by cutting out the cards included in the course material. The card game was played by singing a song made up of the engine sound and the word. As I was singing the song, I held up each card as I went through the alphabet. I then allowed K'Mya to take the cut out cards and place them in alphabetical order by picture (with a little help from me). I then used the " analytical phonics" approach as well as " decoding skills". Once cards were placed in alphabetical order, I called out the pictures of a card to form a word from the engine sounds (i. . , soap, itch, tooth) to make the word " sit". This activity continued until the concept of the activity was understood by K'Mya. I also believe that this approach also including " blending". The next activity included " alphabetic principle" and " emergent literacy/emergent reading and writing" in which the strategy was to teach the student how to write the sounds of the pictures. The first letter of the picture was taught in alphabetical order by making dotted lines on paper to make a letter by connecting the dots.

Once her letters were made she would have to sound it out before moving to the next letter. By this time, my student should have learned these sounds well enough for s to say the sounds a little faster than before again testing the students " fluency". We then played the picture sound game by making a word from the pictures by using the engine sound. At this point, " analytical phonics" was being used. Since K'Mya is a cheerleader we did cheer movements while saying the engine sounds faster (she really enjoyed doing this activity).

After a 15 minute break, we played the footprint game in which I believe this method to be " direct instruction". Once dice was rolled, K'Mya understood that she must move the amount of spaces that she rolled on the dice. Using the " balanced approach", I required her to sound out the engine sound of the pictures as she moved forward to the space in which she rolled the dice. After the game, my strategy was to teach the student " cueing skills" by teaching her to write the words in print then to turn that printed word into a cursive word based on rather the word is slanted to the left, right, or straight.

The second part of our session began with me reminding the student that the " engine sound pulls the word" " like the engine pulls the train". Again, using " fluency" the engine sounds were repeated as fast as the student could say them (which weren't very fast). By this time, K'Mya was getting tired so I ended her day with the " balanced approach" which included two work sheets. The first work sheet consisted of one picture and two words. The student's assignment was to draw a circle around the word that matched the picture then sound out the engine word before saying the word itself.

The other work sheet consisted of words and pictures that she had to match by drawing a line from the word to the picture. This concluded my session for the day with my student. Week 3 I am working with a 6 year old student whose name is K'Mya. My lesson plan for this activity with her was to teach her short cuts for words using the " alphabetic principle". In this activity, instead of posting pictures with the letters, I only posted the alphabet letters. We went through the alphabet using the Aah-Buh-Cuh sounds.

After the short cut sounds were pronounced and comprehended by my student, I then taught her how to recognize two for one sounds by using pictures with the engine sounds teaching " analytic phonics". K'Mya struggled with the understanding of putting pictures together to make a word, however, once I made her repeat the activities over and over until she comprehended the concept she then enjoyed putting pictures together to make a word and this allowed " consonant blends" to go smooth for her. This activity was done using pictures and the Aah-Buh-Cuh sounds until she was comfortable in saying them.

I then tested her " fluency" to see how well she learned the Aah-Buh-Cuh sounds by allowing her to say them as fast as she could. At this point, my student revealed to me that she was bored (lol) so we exercised by doing some jumping jacks while saying the Aah-Buh-Cuh alphabet then she said that she was tired (lol). At this point, I had to motivate her so that she would keep going for a little while longer. We then played the bull's eye two for one game in which at this point " direct instruction" was used.

The object of the game was to see how well K'Mya could say the sound. After saying the sound I instructed my student to say a word containing the sound and extra points were given if she was able to make a word using the sound. I then used the " analytical phonics" approach as well as " decoding skills" by letting my student find pictures of three or more to form a whole word (Can, Apple, Shoe to make the word Cash, etc.). This activity continued until the concept of the activity was understood by K'Mya. I also believe that this approach also included " blending".

The next activity included " alphabetic principle" and " emergent literacy/emergent reading and writing" in which the strategy was to teach the student how to write the sounds of the pictures using the two for one sound (i. e. thumb, itch, nail, forming the word thin). This assignment was a little difficult for my student because she was a little confused by the use of vowels. We then played the picture sound game by making a word from the pictures by using the two for one, short cuts, and Aah-Buh-Cuh's. At this point, " analytical phonics" was being used.

Since K'Mya is a cheerleader we did cheer movements while saying the sounds (she really enjoyed doing this activity). After a 15 minute break, my student learned how to write and connect words in cursive at this point " direct instruction" is being used. After this activity, my strategy was to teach the student " cueing system" by teaching her to write the words in print then to turn that printed word into a cursive word based on rather the word is slanted to the left, right, or straight. The second part of our session began with me recalling all of the sounds that she learned.

Again, using " fluency" the Aah-Buh-Cuh's, two for one, and short cut sounds were repeated as fast as the student could say them (which weren't very fast). By this time, K'Mya was getting tired so I ended her day with the " emergent literacy/emergent reading and writing" by allowing her to draw pictures and write about the pictures. This concluded my session for the day with my student. Week 4 During my experience this week, my focus and strategy was to teach my student " sounds", however, I was out sick this week, therefore I was unable to teach my student so I will give an explanation of what CD's 5 and 6 were about.

In this week's assignment, I learned that phonemic awareness focuses on the perception of spoken language. When children are phonemically aware they can tell the teacher that " bat" or " car" is the word the teacher is representing by saying the three separate sounds in the word. They are also able to tell you all the sounds in the spoken word " dog". They can tell you that, if you take the last sound off " bark" you would have " bar". However, phonics on the other hand, is knowing the relation between specific, printed letters (including combinations of letters) and specific, spoken sounds.

You are asking children to show their phonics knowledge when you ask them which letter make the first sound in bat or car or the last sound in bar or bark. The phonemic awareness tasks that have predicted triumphant reading are tasks that insist that children focus on spoken language, not tasks that simply ask students to name letters or tell which letters make which sounds. This week's CD's 5 and 6 demonstrated that the acquisition of phonemic awareness is highly predictive of success in learning to read – in particular of successful reading acquisition.

Programs for teaching phonics often put emphasis on rules rather than patterns and focus on " separate" sounds, called phonemes. In contrast, the most successful and proficient phonics teaching focuses children's attention on noticing letter/sound patterns in the major components of syllables: that is, on noticing the letter/sound patterns in initial consonants and consonant clusters and in the rime, which consists of the vowel of a syllable plus any following consonants, such as -ack, -eck, -ick, -ock, -uck (Eller, 2009).

Conventional blending and segmentation instruction improves the ability to exercise phonemes. When instruction emphasizes phoneme manipulations, children learned what they were taught. In addition, phonics is the basic rules for translating written symbols into sounds. Emergent readers and writers should be able to identify that there is a relationship between letter patterns and sound patterns in English (the alphabetic principle), and eventually develop an awareness of the separate sounds in words. Without the acknowledgment of words, there would be an unfinished foundation for constructing meaning.

Phonics, along with other use of context, word parts, syntax, and automaticity enables a reader to identify words. Learning the basics-relationships between letters and sounds- enables children to decode words they have never seen before. As this process becomes more automatic, it releases children's attention to the higher-level activities involved in comprehending the text's meaning. When children have a perspective in which to learn the code system, teaching of phonics is most triumphant. Children who have been exposed to print during the early child development years have a concrete foundation for learning to read.

For children lacking this foundation, activities such as listening to stories, shared reading of Big Books and matching print in nursery rhymes on charts provides them with a context of phonics awareness. After listening to both CD's, I found that most of the phonics used in the activities included; alphabetic principle, balanced approach, blending, decoding, direct instruction, consonants and consonants blends. The overall process of learning the meaning of reading and teaching a student how to read was a meaningful experience to me. I never knew that it had meaning behind the way sounds were made.

The online phonics dictionary located on the web-site http://www. indiana. edu/~reading/phonics/glossary/a_c. html was a very enlightening experience for me. To learn the alphabet principle, analytic phonics, balanced approach, blending, consonants, decoding, fluency, etc. they all were interesting ways of learning or teaching a child or an adult as well to read. I will continue to use these strategies in my teaching career as I strive to make a difference in a child's life. I have enjoyed this class and deem it to be one of the best classes that I have taken those far and look forward to my endeavor in the field of teaching.