

Essay on code focused instruction strategies

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Literacy is one of the areas of childhood development, which is considered as a barometer used to gauge future development and aptitude of the child. Generally, the goal of literacy instruction is for teachers to synchronize the early literacy approaches to engage children and also to offer a strong foundation for the children's literacy skills. Literacy development in young children has been viewed as a complex and dynamic process that requires input from all concerned stakeholders so as to ensure that a child acquires the right skills. Literacy development is therefore concerned about issues such as listening, reading, speaking, writing and even viewing, and most importantly, understanding.

This paper identifies instructional strategies that are helpful for literacy development in young children as code focused interventions, oral language, as well as shared reading instructional strategies and relates such strategies with the developmental stage of such children so as to find out its appropriateness for such a developmental group. The use of differentiated literacy instruction strategies will also be explored.

This is basically the strategy that is employed to enable learners to understand the concept and use of alphabets, usually as one of the strategies used in the earliest learning attempts for the child. Code focused instruction strategies are generally employed in the very formative years since the skills imparted by the instruction are considered basic and fundamental, the lack of which may spell disaster in the child's learning endeavors. According to the findings of the National Early Literacy Panel (NELP), code focused skills are most appropriate for preschool and kindergarten level. Such strategies assist the child in manipulating sounds in

spoken words, knowing the letters of the alphabet as well as combining such letters to make sounds.

Learning how to read, speak and also use sounds is a very basic element of learning, and therefore, the code focused instructional strategy is best utilized in this particular developmental group. It is therefore important to provide code focused instructions that build the child's ability to hear, and manipulate sounds in words, understand alphabets and the speech sounds represented by such alphabets, at a very early stage in the life of the child.

Oral language instruction strategy

Oral skills is the ability to produce as well as comprehend language that is spoken. It's a variety of skilled mainly hinged on expressive and receptive vocabulary, listening and comprehension, as well as the ability to understand the meaning and use of words appropriately, therefore, the importance of oral language skills cannot be overemphasized. The oral language instruction strategy is therefore a very critical aspect of teaching, as it enables the teacher to reach out to a broad spectrum of student, and their literacy needs.

On whether the oral language instruction strategy is developmentally appropriate, the NELP report found out that oral language intervention were actually more effective for children of 0-3 years than in later years (National Center for Family Literacy, 2009). This therefore means that the strategy is quite appropriate for developing children especially the young ones.

In this strategy, the instructor creates an environment that encourages language acquisition, as a result of both formal and informal interactions where children's literacy occurs as children engage in conversations during

plays, as well as planned experiences with both adults as well as peers (Early Childhood Today). The teacher, therefore employs this strategy through various ways in encouraging children to learn how to use oral language, by introducing new vocabulary, telling how such new vocabulary is used and what it means, the strategy employs methods such as scaffolding, giving feedback, narrative talk etc.

Shared reading strategy

It's a strategy used as an instruction method in which teachers involve children in their small groups in reading books. It's deemed the most important thing that adults can do to help in the development of literacy skills (LaRocque & Darling, 2008). Shared reading, according to NELP has been found to have a positive impact on the child's oral language skills as well as print knowledge.

In this strategy, the instructor facilitates shared reading among children and even guides them to ensure that the particular reading skills are acquired. This strategy, is therefore particularly effective in small children, as it helps them get the basic skills that enable them to comprehend language in their future reading attempts. It also presents an opportunity for the teacher to be able to gauge the language capacity of learners and their ability to read, and therefore engage them further.

Psychologists have argued that the above instruction strategies would be ideal for a homogenous class where there is little diversity. The concept of differentiated literacy instruction has therefore gained prominence to try and meet the needs of the various classes of children in the classroom. It emphasized that instruction should be modified to meet the needs of the

individual learners as opposed to the expectation that the learner should adapt to the instructions so as to gain literacy.

Such is as a result of the work of Piaget's perspective that human development is never a continuous process, rather it's a discontinuing process in that learners move at their own individual paces and it's therefore imperative that learning instructions are designed to meet the needs of these various learners.

Differentiated instruction strategy is therefore, designed to help learners with different needs, as they cannot be addressed by a single homogenous strategy. This differentiated strategy assists the teachers to reach out to each single learner and deal with their learner specific needs. The differentiated strategy employs a cooperation of all the three discussed strategies so as to reach all children, in addressing their needs.

When children meet together in school, they are put in the same class, in the same environment. Since these children come from different backgrounds, they have different levels of knowledge of various issues as well as attitudes towards learning. Its upon the instructor to recognize this factor and design strategies that will help the learners , regardless of their differences. For instance, a child may be able to read and write, but have poor oral skills, while another could have excellent oral skills but their writing skills could be wanting, In such a scenario, the teacher should be able to integrate both oral literacy strategies with the shared reading, or even the coded focus instruction strategies so as to meet the needs of all learners. A differentiated strategy, therefore helps the instructor to be able to integrate different instructions so as to achieve a given goal.

National Center for Family Literacy (2009) What Works: An Introductory Teacher Guide for Early Language and Emergent Literacy Instruction.

LaRocque, M& Darling, M. S (2008) Blended Curriculum in the Inclusive K-3 Classroom Teaching ALL Young Children. Pearson Education, Inc.

Early Childhood Today: Activities. Adapted from, <http://teacher.scholastic.com/products/ect/activities/>