Elements of vocabulary, fluency and background knowledge critical thinking exampl...

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Abstract

The struggle of reading comprehension has been pervasive around the world for centuries; it is of no surprise how even current statistics illustrate how many adults have difficulty reading and comprehending the most basic literature. As well-intentioned as well-crafted learning models have been launched to bridge the gap between low and high comprehending participants, the root of the problem stems from repeated modeling to students of diverse generations. Although some learning models have proven to be useful, new or rebooted models are sometimes necessary for younger students understanding elements of vocabulary, fluency, and background knowledge for reading and comprehension. Each element may call for unparalleled instructions whether for the purposes of learning a multitude of words in the English language or learning a second language. Systematically, the striving effort to reach end results in learning is debatable as to classify student demographics or provide diverse models for students, and according to what senses they optimize to learn. If only learning modes may be individually or collectively designed to assist diverse students on how they perceive understanding elements, each of their respective backgrounds may suffice in their learning abilities. Hence, this topical educational subject shall demonstrate the progressive research to refine and improve models incorporating elements of understanding for students ranging from pre-school to grade 12. Each element is examined through practical instructions in which their respective components are

implemented to overcome learning obstacles in reading comprehension. This article combines both theories and practices of reading instruction. Suggestions for future instructional models to assist students in reading comprehension are also included. Whenever the term " key elements" are mentioned, they shall refer to the following three word groups: vocabulary, fluency, and background knowledge.

Keywords: reading comprehension, vocabulary, reading fluency, background knowledge, teaching theories

- Main Theories of Instruction

When preparing a set of instructions for children, teachers do not simply launch a full-scale curriculum, as children at particular levels would not grasp the teacher's concepts. Teachers must qualify with different and accepted theories to assist children in breaking through their learning barriers, as their own qualifications render children dependent upon their future academic outlook.

Although many theories and standards are put into educational practice, to start naming a few, one theory dealing with vocabulary, fluency, and background knowledge is Erikson's theory (Stanrock, 2010). Erikson implements principles based on two commonly known development stages: Preoperational and Concrete Operational stages. These measure children's learning perception. The preoperational stage denotes children combining words and images to portray symbols to provide visual perception. The concrete operational stage denotes how children reason and classify about events formulated by words and sentences.

Furthermore to Erikson's theory classifies elementary aged children by the following comparable partitions:

- Initiative vs. Guilt – responsibility for themselves and their belongings

- Industry vs. Inferiority - enthusiasm about learning

- Identity vs. Identity Confusion – taking on more adult roles and who they want to be

Common knowledge suggests that the educational system established understands how various stages of learning determine how students handle their progression (Douvan, 1997). As children have the credentials to step further onto more advanced studies, teachers and professionals observe that children may function on their own, instead of requiring constant supervision.

Early in the learning stages, especially for preschoolers up to higher and intermediate grades, students must continue to apply quality vocabulary instruction by Vygotsky's sociocultural theory. This theory integrates background knowledge with step-by-step in children's thought patterns and behaviour (Van der Veer, R., & Valsiner, J., 1991). Yet each learning element at various stages can be interdependent on one another. For example, instructions by teachers would provide background knowledge in early stages helping students remember in self-regulating themselves. By learning multitudes of vocabulary combined at younger ages, will students then embark on the fluency of languages? In later stages or grades, students have the years of background knowledge, or experience, to provide them the capability of learning advanced vocabulary to strive for fluency in the written and spoken word. However, in most grades between pre-school and grade

12, learning tools are additionally achieved by passing them onto others in a collaborative procedure, where students can understand each other to learn specific skills.

Finally Gardner's Theory of Multiple Intelligences, also known as the 8 Framed of Mind defines various intelligence types where some students possess stronger learning characteristics than others. This theory is useful in practice because students learn at different rates, and teachers utilize different styles of teaching with its tools to help students improve on their relative strengths (Gilman, 2012). For example, since the key elements (vocabulary, fluency, and background knowledge) suggest variable rates of learning for each student, each element more strongly present helps teachers isolate student strength per element to evaluate their standings with reference to the other elements.

2. 0 Current Research on Key Components

When presenting instructions of the key elements, they shall be intertwined with efficient and effective components, as prepared by teachers in forms of how they are executed with the notion and purpose toward a certain age group. Two of several key components is the selection of qualified teaching objectives relevant to collaboration and independent acquisition skills. With arrangement of students into groups to practice vocabulary already or previously learned, they can actively apply, discuss and illustrate word meanings with their classroom peers (Donohue, 2000). The collaboration component can also encourage students to apply their acquired learning outside the classroom. The independent acquisition skill requires students to individually participate in more hands-on applications such as dictionary

skills, word structure and context. Leading students into a self-motivation mode helps them appreciate their learning abilities, and earn the desire to learn advanced word study.

One fallacy, however, is memorizing a few word lessons and word definitions assist students in becoming word fluent. This is not the case. The root of the issue falls upon vocabulary instruction and purposely repeating word exposure with interactive instructions. The planning of proper instruction and then put into practice helps retain newly learned words. This way students need not to strive tensely to remember what they have learned or apply the rote method to remember words. Students shall know how to separate various word references from their related meanings to fully understand words. Regardless of several words having related meanings, students shall be proficient in isolating each word according to their unique contribution territory distinct from other words (Channel, 1978). The comprehension and word cohesiveness must hold meaning for the student to make sense of application of the word.

3. 0 Instructional Practices, Materials & Resources

While the procedures in applying these strategies depend on the individual teacher's preference, each are beneficial, yet are unique, as they also broadly capture advanced educational methods with newly invented and improved tools. Therefore, these five strategies are qualified to enhance learning in the key elements from utilizing rudimentary tools to the most recently advanced electronic tools. In today's schools systems, most students learn from electronic boards of instructions and similar various devices. The five strategies can be utilized in implementing instructions with

the presence or absence of the teacher. Basic teaching methods may also be helpful for teachers who prefer to initiate the teaching curriculum prior to introducing electronic devices.

Some teaching resources require closer attention for presenting course material to select students. For example, some teachers encourage students to refer to dictionaries to learn vocabulary, while others are encouraged to refer to the online Merriam-Webster word archives. The rate at which students absorb instructions and resources can be dependent on what learning channels and practices each teacher prefers and feels the students would benefit (Allen, 1983). Over the last few decades, the constructivist learning theory has displayed how learning the key elements are incorporated by actively preparing in one's own understanding. The difficulty is applying any generic teaching method and expecting students to obtain better skills in the exact same amount of time under the same strategy.

4. 0 Research Implications on ELL & Special Needs Students

Learning English as a second language for foreign or immigrant students have always been a struggle. In fact, very few foreign students immigrating at a later age manage to improve on their elocution and eliminate their foreign accents (Walter, 2012). However the lack of understanding English does not solely rest upon the foreign student's ability. These students often feel psychologically isolated and uncomfortable which hinder their progress when speaking with native English speakers. Their foreign accents signal native speakers that they are not of the officially English-speaking country. Unless foreign students have immigrated at a younger age, they may never eliminate their accents or improve on elocution (Chiang, 2000). These

obstructions frequently affect their ability to grasp the key elements. Teachers often become frustrated, counterproductive, and even label themselves as being incompetent at teaching. Yet, the fault is not always the teachers or the students.

Most ELL students begin learning English at various starting points, and cannot advance as quickly as native speakers because of their speaking levels. Plus the transition of reading the written word from their own backgrounds and native languages to English slows their learning progress. The only guarantee for ELL students is to ensure they do not fall behind their fellow students. Again their improvements must rely on designated key components and instructional practices. One of the most effective tools is extensive scaffolding to help students visualize and simplify language concepts. Instructional material may also be modified to help students access their progress rates and levels. Teachers could implement the use of both oral and written exercises of the same form, because perception varies among students. Some students grasp instructions orally with lengthy attention spans, while others prefer visual instructions with illustration associated with words (pictures, graphics, etc.).

In spite of learning English as the primary language, special needs students also struggle because of learning disabilities, which is a challenge for educators. The issue also stems from teachers and educators distinguishing with learning disabilities from students falling behind for other reasons, and the shortage of special needs teachers prevents progress (Heller, 2010). These needed teachers are generally trained to identify problems in both categories explaining why they are in demand, and possess the credentials

of prevention of failure. An environmental creation renders special needs students a sense of belonging with regular students instead of feeling isolated because of their limited learning abilities, where prevention of failure may begin. Interaction among various students characterizes positivity especially for students beginning under strong administrative leadership.

In order to assist special needs students reach the same learning level as regular students, they require access to high quality instruction similar to the key components in instructional resources and practice (Berk & Winsler, 1995). Once again by scoping their background knowledge teacher are able to employ strategies by correlating visual and oral instructions to previously acquired lessons. When teachers observe students progressing at accepted levels of understanding, they may be able to apply student knowledge across basic subjects by maintain guidance to suggest a new stage in background knowledge.

5. 0 Research Implications for Professional Qualifications

Generally to teach any level of grade school, one must be educated, qualified, and certified with practical training under supervision. Normally for the average grade school teacher the credentials are paralleled with other educators teaching in other grades. For foreign and special needs students, a more streamlined and specific certification is required. Since grade school is considered formative, the ability to utilize and teach the three key elements shall be mandatory. Naturally when completing academic studies, educators are not yet fully qualified to be assigned a classroom of their own, because educators majored in diverse subjects that not all educators may teach. In

other words, teachers and educators experience a probation period before they are deemed qualifies as full-time educators. Additionally, following a milestone of experience, educators are required to contribute to the improvement of school curricula; not only for proof of qualification but to share learning notions with school boards. In pre-school and primary grades, teachers are usually proficient in most, but in the basics, of subjects. In higher intermediate grades, more specialization of subjects is required, explaining why in high school teachers are limited to teaching a few subjects, although extensively where they must achieve at least a degree level and a minor subject.

As for qualifications of teaching the key elements, mastery of reading skills is a necessity because the ability of educators would later reflect on student learning ability and understanding. Prior to educators ensuring student progress and teaching higher level subjects, are responsible for monitoring student levels of the key elements. If students are struggling to grasp the key elements, they will have difficulty in learning new subjects, and their learning difficulties could build up. With more experienced educators, having a solid background of the ley elements shall be deemed mandatory when teaching a full class of students, and possess various skills of communication to teach diverse students with different levels of learning. Conclusively, possessing the ability to learn the key elements firsthand, is also the key teaching criteria, since all school subjects depend on the clear oral and written vessels of the very words on which they are built upon.

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