

Discuss the strengths and weaknesses of the three views of reading instruction



Teaching reading is one of the more important of the skills, if not the most important, which teachers are obliged to pass on to young learners. Given the importance of this particular skill and considering that it is the founding block of education, the past decades have witnessed the evolution of several reading instruction theories, amongst which are the subskills, interactive and transactive theories.

The subskills approach belongs to the group of reading theories which adhere to a bottoms-up approach. This means that it advocates the teaching of reading in incremental steps. Students first learn how to read letters and combination of letters before moving on to words and complete sentences. The theory, in other words, maintains that the optimal strategy for learning reading is to study the parts and then move onto the whole. Basically, the primary advantage of the subskills theory is that it facilitates the learning of reading process by taking young learning through it step by step. Its disadvantage, however, lies in the tremendous emphasize it places on learning linguistic rules, something which young learners find difficult.

The interactive theory, based on the one explained above as well as one the top-down group of reading instructions theory, calls upon readers to decode texts by bringing their background knowledge and experiences into the text. Readers, in other words, are called upon to engage with that which they read and make sense of it through their own experiences. As such, its primary intent is the teaching of decoding, vocabulary and comprehension skills. At this point, it is quite possible to infer the primary strength of the defined reading instruction theory lies in its promotion of student comprehension through learner's experiences, implying the enhancement of comprehension through the highlighting of a text's practical relevance. Its weakness, <https://assignbuster.com/discuss-the-strengths-and-weaknesses-of-the-three-views-of-reading-instruction/>

however, may be that it calls upon, as yet, cognitively and emotionally immature learners to subjectively engage with a text.

As regards the transactional theory, it is little more than an elaboration upon the interactive group of reading instruction theories. As per this approach, readers decode, use their own knowledge, experiences and emotions to understand a text. Its strength lies in that it embraces the strengths of both the subskills and the interactive theories, while its weakness are the same as those cited for both the latter and former.

Each of the reading instruction theories outlined in the preceding have their unique set of strengths and weaknesses. It is the responsibility of the effective teacher to exploit the said strengths while minimizing the identified weaknesses.