

**Syrian Arab Republic
Damascus University
Faculty of Education**



Methodology of Teaching English to Young Learners

Ali Saud Hasan, PhD

Professor of Applied Linguistics: ELT

Damascus University

Methodology of Teaching English to Young Learners is a book for teachers and teachers in preparation. It includes a wealth of helpful teaching strategies and techniques for teaching English to young learners.

Ali Saud Hasan, Ph.D.

Professor of Applied Linguistics: ELT

Faculty of Education

Damascus University

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Preface

This book is for student-teachers of English to young learners. It is also intended for teacher trainers to enhance teacher's professional development. Although the book offers many ideas to be implemented in the classroom, it is hoped that teachers will develop them in their own practice.

The term 'young learners' refers to the age groups of lower and upper stages (younger learners from six-to nine- year- olds and older learners from ten- to fourteen-year-olds). The ideas in this book can be applicable to those two groups of learners. Teachers need to deal with these two categories appropriately. For instance, younger learners have a holistic approach to language learning and they need to understand meaningful messages but not to analyse the language; whereas older learners show an interest in analytical approaches and have developed language skills. It is the teacher's responsibility to take these factors into consideration when teaching English as a foreign language to young learners.

The first chapter presents background information about issues of general development and language learning. It provides a brief overview of young learners' stages of language development, theories of learning, and multiple intelligences theory and its implication for language teaching and styles of learning.

Preface

The second chapter addresses how first language learning differs from second language learning in an attempt to offer important insights to teachers about the link between learning the first language and the foreign language. The aim is to familiarise teachers with those differences so that they can work with children on this basis. It also provides background information about second language acquisition theories: the behaviourist, the innatist and the interactionist perspectives. This theoretical background forms the foundation for second or foreign language learning and acquisition. Chapter 3 considers the issue of learning to learn highlighting the importance of involving children in the learning process.

Following these chapters which constitute the theoretical background to teaching young learners, the book, then, turns to the practice of teaching language skills. Chapters 4 and 5 deal with teaching listening and speaking skills respectively.

Chapter 6 deals with the significance of phonemic awareness and phonics instruction in helping children use the alphabet in order to understand the relationship between letters and sounds and, thus, improve their reading skill which is taken up in chapter 7. Chapter 8 takes reading skills a step further to provide a bridge between word recognition and comprehension. It focuses on fluency in reading and comprehending at the same time. It also deals with text comprehension instruction. These reading skills are further

investigated with reference to technology in Chapter 9, which deals with technology and teaching children to read, as the integration of technology into teaching language skills has become a major feature of contemporary education. This chapter, then, focuses on the link between technology and teaching the building blocks of elementary reading which constitute the basic components of reading ability for young learners.

Writing as a skill is usually taught in parallel with reading. Chapter 10 discusses teaching writing to young learners and presents steps of the process of writing. Chapter 11 looks at teaching the language system; i.e., vocabulary and grammar to young learners. It illustrates the interdependence between vocabulary and grammar and includes recent vocabulary research as it applies to young learners.

The final chapter, 12, provides an overview of assessment techniques to young learners through classroom-based assessment activities. At the end of the book, there are appendices which offer teachers and learners tasks to assess their multiple intelligences and evaluate their own teaching and learning. In addition, children's songs and finger plays, which are appealing to all ages, are provided in appendix 2.

Ali Saud Hasan

Damascus, 2013



1

Young Learners Language Development

1. Introduction

The first chapter of this book is devoted to illustrate how children learn new concepts and develop their understanding about the world, and how adults can help them make the process possible. This knowledge about children's development is intended to make a link between children's general development and language learning development.

2. Stages of Development

Children share some common things with their peers; children of similar-age groups act similarly in a range of situations. Pinter (2006), for example, observes, "Parents of five-year olds find that their children use similar arguments in conversations or enjoy very similar games, activities and jokes"(p. 6). Piaget observed these similarities and developed a framework of four universal stages of development. Each child follows these stages in exactly the same order and development

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unfolds as a result of the biological processes of growth, and development of the child's brain.

The main characteristics of children's development within each stage are summarised in the following table:

Sensori-motor stage (from birth to two years of age)

- The young child learns to interact with the environment by manipulating objects around him.

Pre-operational stage (from two to seven years of age)

- The child's thinking is largely reliant on perception but he or she gradually becomes more and more capable of logical thinking. On the whole, this stage is characterized by egocentrism (a kind of self-centredness) and a lack of logical thinking.

Concrete operational stage (from seven to eleven years of age)

- Year 7 is the 'turning point' in cognitive development because children's thinking begins to resemble 'logical' adult-like thinking. They develop the ability to apply logical reasoning in several areas of knowledge at the same time (such as math, science, or map reading) but this ability is restricted to the immediate context. This means that children at this stage cannot yet generalize their understanding.

Formal operational stage (from eleven years onwards)

- Children are able to think beyond the immediate context in more abstract terms. They are able to carry out logical operations such as deductive reasoning in a systematic way. They achieve 'formal logic'.

Table 1.1: Piagetian Stages of Development (Pinter, 2006, p. 7)

Teachers of English need to be acquainted with the Piagetian framework so that they can work with different age groups. It should be noted that "teaching a class of 12-year-olds requires very different materials, methods, and teaching style from a class of six-year-olds"(Pinter,2006, pp. 6-7). This means that teachers have to be able to respond to the needs and interests of various age groups.

3. Appropriate Instruction

As a teacher of young learners you need to provide appropriate instructions that are in line with children's basic physical and psychological needs. These needs must be fulfilled so that children can focus on their learning. As a teacher, then, you have to provide care and instruction at the same time. Your instructions should be adjusted to meet the developmental stages of the child. As Linse (2005) contends:

A child who cannot recognize the numbers between 1 and 100 is not ready to do multiplication. A child who has developed strong oral language skills in her native language is better prepared to begin reading than a child who has not. A young learner who can comprehend a sequence of events is better prepared to understand a story than a child who cannot (p. 3).

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This means that caregivers are encouraged to adjust to a child's individual stages and rates of development. Children need teachers who can interact with them in appropriate ways according to their social, emotional physical, cognitive, and moral development (Brazelton and Greenspan, 2000, cited in Linse, 2005).

It should be made clear that there are individual differences in children development; in other words, children develop at different rates. "There are children who will quickly grasp sound-symbol relationships, whereas it will take others a longer period of time to comprehend this concept" (Linse, 2005, p. 3). When teachers become aware of children's rates of development, they are better able to provide appropriate learning tasks, which are progressively more difficult, within the child's reach. As a teacher, you need to be aware of the children's strengths as well as areas where they may need assistance so that you can plan appropriate teaching.

It is worth mentioning that a child does not develop emotionally, morally, physically and cognitively at the same rate. Linse (2005) explains, "Children who are considered to be intellectually gifted are also often considered to be emotionally young. A child may learn to read at a very early age and have developed advanced cognitive skills but behave in ways that are viewed as emotionally and socially immature" (p.5). Thus, development can be inconsistent.

4. Children's Development and Interests

As a teacher, you need first to become familiar with your pupils. In addition, it is also necessary to know their interests; this is especially important as young learners, who are interested in a specific subject, say English or even a specific activity or task, are more likely to be successful. Linse (2005) argues, "By knowing what interests your students, you will be able to create engaging and motivating English lessons" (p. 6). Linse maintains that there are many ways for the teacher to learn about children's development and interests:

- Observing children as they interact with their peers, other teachers and their parents.
- Observing children's emotional and social development through their interactions.
- The types of conversations that children have can also shed light into their cognitive development.
- Observing children's physical development through their engagement in sports activities. Do they enjoy physical activities or avoid them?
- Observing a child's social development by watching how he interacts with his peers and with adults. Is there give and take, or is he being dominated by them? Being aware of this aspect of

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social development will be helpful when asking children to work with one another.

- Paying attention to children's belongings: A child who keeps pictures of horses may do so because horses are his favourite animal. A child who reads books without pictures has probably developed advanced cognitive skills.
- Asking children to take simple surveys. For example, complete each sentence:

I like to

It is easy for me to.....

It is hard for me to.....

It used to be hard for me to..... but now it is easy

I like to have help me when it is hard for me to do something. (Linse, 2005, pp. 19-20)

- * Talking to children about their responses to the survey.
- * Examining children's work such as drawings and writings can tell you something about their growth, development and interests, especially their social, emotional and cognitive development. Linse (2005) describes, "Children who are younger and less developed cognitively, generally include less detail in their drawings" (p. 10).

5. The Role of Interaction

Vygotsky's Theory of Learning

Piaget framework focuses on the biological basis of development from stage to stage. Another important social side of development should be taken into consideration. "The social environment, the cultural context, and in particular the influence of peers, teachers, and parents engaged in interactions with children are also major sources of learning and development" (Pinter, 2006, p. 10).

Like Piaget, Lev Vygotsky (1978) believes that children construct knowledge for themselves and they actively participate in the learning process. However, he emphasised the role of the social environment, culture and social context in learning. He explored the learning potential of the individual with the help and support of the adult within the 'zone of proximal development or the ZPD'.

Children's language development occurs through social interaction and experiences based on the context of situation (Vygotsky, 1978). Adults support children by modifying their input and interactions to make the message understood within the child's *Zone of proximal development* (ZPD). "This concept describes the difference or the 'zone' between the current knowledge of the child and the potential knowledge achievable with some help from a more knowledgeable peer or adult" (Pinter, 2006, p. 11).

The ZPD refers to the area of support provided by the adult so that children can accomplish the tasks they couldn't do on their own. According to Vygotsky, a child would not be able to complete a certain task independently but needs further support. "Vygotsky argues that working within the ZPD is a fertile ground for learning because it starts with what the teacher already knows and builds on it according to the child's immediate needs to go forward" (Pinter, 2006, p. 11). For example, a three-year-old boy who can count numbers up to about 10 or 11 but cannot carry on might stop counting. A parent or teacher can prompt him by giving him a clue (showing the number of fingers) that follows and helps him to continue.

This sort of support that can be given through interaction within a child's ZPD is sometimes called 'scaffolding' (Wood, Bruner and Ross, 1978). As a teacher, you can provide the scaffolding necessary for the learner to answer a question. You can model the language using the learners' words:

T: Mi Li, What do you like to do on weekends?

S: Play.

T: Who do you like to play with? (waits a full 10 seconds.
Remembers the picture that Mi Li drew playing with her kitten)
Do you like to play with your dog or your cat?

S: My cat.

T: Good. You like to play with your cat (Linse, 2005, p.15).

In this extract, the teacher encourages the child ensuring that the child stays on track to finish the task during the interaction that takes place in the ZPD.

Another way to provide scaffolding is to increase the amount of wait time for children to respond to a certain question as it might take them few seconds to access the teachers' information before answering the question. You can model the language using the learners' words.

6. Children as Unique Learners

Multiple Intelligences

The previous sections have dealt with Piaget stages of development which show how children at similar ages share certain characteristics. In addition, Vygotsky's theory of social interaction which offers children unique enriching experiences has been clarified. This section explores the issue of uniqueness in terms of Gardner's framework of multiple intelligences.

Individual children enjoy different activities; while children may enjoy singing and talking, they may also show very little interest in

writing, or drawing. Psychologists have argued for taking such differences into account when assessing children's intelligence.

Gardner (1983) suggested that intelligence manifested itself in many ways in different children. He refers to these multiple intelligences as 'frames of mind'. The types of intelligences are linguistic, logico-mathematical, musical, spatial, bodily/kinesthetic, interpersonal, intrapersonal, and natural. Table 1.2 summarizes the main features of each type of intelligence.

Linguistic:	sensitivity to the sound, rhythm, and meaning of words and the different functions of language
Logico-mathematical:	sensitivity to and capacity to detect logical and numerical patterns, ability to handle long chains of logical reasoning
Musical:	ability to produce or appreciate pitch, rhythm, or melody and aesthetic-sounding tones, understanding of the forms of musical expressiveness
Spatial:	ability to perceive the visual/spatial world accurately, to perform transformations on those perceptions, and to recreate aspects of visual experience in the absence of relevant stimuli
Bodily-kinesthetic:	ability to use the body skillfully for expressive as well as goal oriented purposes, ability to handle objects skillfully
Interpersonal:	ability to detect and respond appropriately to the moods, temperaments, motivations, and intentions of others
Intrapersonal:	ability to discriminate complex inner feelings and to use them to guide one's own behaviour, knowledge of one's own strengths, weaknesses, desires, and intelligences
Naturalist:	ability to recognize and classify varieties of animals, minerals, and plants

Table 1.2: Gardner's Multiple Intelligences. Adapted from L. Berk: Child Development, Allyn and Bacon 2005, cited in Pinter, 2006, p. 14).

Gardner (1985) has pointed out seven areas of intelligence: mathematical/logical, interpersonal (understanding others), intrapersonal (understanding one's self), bodily/kinesthetic, verbal linguistic, musical and spatial. An additional intelligence (ability to discern patterns in nature) has been added to the list.

This theory of multiple intelligence is very important for teachers of young learners as it explores children's strengths so that teachers can build on them. It enables teachers to include activities in lesson planning that make each child feel success. "Teachers who are aware of this framework can ensure that their teaching is meaningful to all children with anyone or any combination of these intelligences" (Pinter, 2006, p. 13). In addition, Linse (2005) suggests that you may want to include a logic puzzle with geometric shapes for students who have logical-mathematical intelligences. For intrapersonal students, you might create learning stations where they can work alone. For children with verbal intelligence, you might want to make sure that they have sufficient time to spend at the writing centre. For bodily kinesthetic learners, you might want to have them dance to English-language songs. For students with verbal linguistic intelligence, you might want to provide them with extra English-language books to read or give them word puzzles to do.

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For students with intrapersonal intelligence, you may want to include activities which require them to work alone. For students with interpersonal intelligence, you may want to include activities which require them to work with partners or in small groups. For students with naturalist intelligence, you may want to include science books about nature.

Multiple intelligences theory has biological origins. "Each person has new biological potential. We differ in the particular intelligence profiles with which we are born and the ways in which we develop them"(Christison, 2005, p. 5).

Implications of MI theory for language teaching

Armstrong (1994 cited in Christison 2005, pp.7-8) has synthesized the implications of the theory into four key points:

- 1. Each person possesses all eight intelligences.** In each person the eight intelligences function together in unique ways. Some people have high levels of functioning in all or most of the intelligences; a few people lack most of the rudimentary aspects of intelligence. Most people are somewhere in the middle – with a few intelligences highly developed, most modestly developed, and one or two underdeveloped.

- 2. Intelligences can be developed.** In the traditional view, intelligence is defined as an attribute that doesn't change with age, training, or experience. Traditional views of intelligence support the notion that we are born with a certain amount of intelligence and that intelligence will not change as a result of life experiences. MI theory, on the other hand, suggests that humans have the capacity to develop all eight intelligences to a reasonably high level of performance with appropriate encouragement, enrichment, and instruction.
- 3. Intelligences work together in complex ways.** No intelligence really exists by itself. Intelligences are always interacting with each other. For example, in order to cook a meal, one must read a recipe (linguistic), perhaps double it (logical/mathematical), and prepare a menu that satisfies others you may cook for (interpersonal) and yourself (intrapersonal).
- 4. There are many different ways to be intelligent.** There is no set standard of attributes that one must have in order to be considered intelligent. One might be completely awkward in a dance class and yet a marvel in building construction. Both activities require bodily/ kinesthetic intelligence.

It is important to remember that Howard Gardner was not designing a curriculum or preparing a model to be used in schools with his multiple intelligences theory (Hoerr, 1997). Educators have taken the theory, put it together in different ways, and applied it to their lesson planning and program and curriculum development. The theory provides a framework within which teachers can use their imaginations and creativity in designing materials for the second language classroom. Christison (2005) believes that these four key points "are all attractive to the second language teaching profession because they provide a framework to appreciate and value the diversity we observe in our students, and they provide us with a structure for addressing these differences in our teaching" (p. 8).

Classroom Applications

MI theory offers language teachers some ways to examine their teaching techniques and strategies. Christison (2005) presents important steps for the language teacher to follow in applying the theory:

1. Introduce yourself to the basic theory.
2. Take an MI inventory.

Teachers should first apply MI theory to themselves as educators (Armstrong, 1994) as a next step for EFL teachers to determine their multiple intelligences profile. Inventories can also be used with students (see appendix 1). The idea is that such inventories may

enable teachers to make choices that affect their teaching. Christison (2005) claims, "Both language students and language teachers benefit from instructional approaches that help them reflect on their own learning" (p. 9).

3. Learn to categorize familiar language activities. It is important for you to classify the activities you normally do as they relate to different intelligences.
4. Conduct a personal audit of your own teaching. Try to make choices about which activities relate to MI theory.
5. Develop assessment techniques that address the right intelligences.

Try to integrate instruction with assessment. Base your testing practices on the eight intelligences—not just the linguistic and logical/mathematical practices that dominate educational assessment. Christison (2005) encourages her students to participate in the assessment process and focuses on giving them options. Specifically, she asks her students to put themselves in her shoes and tell her what they would like to do to show that they knew and understood the content of the material.

Christison (2005) contends, "Successful teaching in an MI curriculum is about helping students develop skills for 'solving problems and fashioning products' in their real lives. It is about preparing students for experiences outside of the classroom. Are

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students assessed in ways that are consistent with what they will be expected to know and do in the wider world?" (p. 12).

In conclusion, teachers usually do not use MI theory in the same way. Some teachers will use it for lesson content, others will include all eight intelligences. There is no correct way to follow, but it is important to understand how MI theory informs your teaching according to your own circumstances.

Learning Styles

'Multiple intelligences' can be related to 'learning styles'. This latter term describes personality types such as more careful and reflective children as opposed to more interactive children and analytic or global learners within the cognitive categories. Other styles describe perceptual differences such as listening to new input or the need for visual stimulus. Yet other styles are kinesthetic which means that learners like to feel and touch things and move their body to aid their learning.

Teachers need to consider that all children have some stronger or weaker aspects of their multiple intelligences and preferred teaching styles. For this reason, Pinter (2005) suggests that teachers need to incorporate a variety of activities into second and foreign language classrooms to ensure that everybody's preferences are catered for at least some of the time. For example, when new rhymes or songs are introduced in an English class, it is a good idea to present them using

a variety of techniques. Children can listen to the teacher or the tape saying or singing the rhyme or the song. This will cater for learners with an auditory preference.

Children can also look at the text of the song or the rhyme in the book or look at the illustrations. This activity will cater for visual learners. Finally children can watch the teacher miming the actions and join in with the words and actions, too. This will cater for kinesthetic learners. Incorporating various 'senses' also makes learning memorable and fun. Once aware of having to cater for different intelligences, teachers can make their lessons more accessible to all children (Pinter, 2005, pp. 14-15).

Mixed Ability Classes

Teachers have to deal with various children with very high ability or slower learners with learning difficulties. Many teachers face problems when they work with large mixed ability classes where they have to cater for different needs.

Pinter (2006) concludes, "It is essential that all children of all abilities find learning a new language a motivating and rewarding exercise and that they can progress at their own pace. It is the teacher's challenge to provide them with suitable tasks and rewards according to their individual needs" (p. 15). This means that teachers need to deal with certain learners on an individual basis; for example, the teacher may ask gifted children to learn independently

so that they can deal with motivating tasks, while the rest of students are asked to do something else. On the other hand, slower learners need special support to keep them motivated. In addition, children enjoy working together in pairs or small groups where more capable learners can help slower learners.

Children's progress in performance must be monitored carefully overtime as they can develop new strengths or go through 'ups and downs'. Children can be affected by certain events such as the birth of a brother or sister or a parent being away from home which might lead to a decline in their performance. Therefore, teachers need to be in touch with parents to avoid such circumstances.

7. Summary

It can be concluded that children may exhibit similar characteristics within a certain age, but they also differ in their strengths and preferences. Teachers, therefore, need to be aware of the universal aspects of children's development, but they need to focus on individual learners at the same time. This means that they need to decide on suitable materials and various activities to fit their learners intelligences and their learning styles at different ages and in different contexts. By including variety in their classes, teachers can make their lessons interesting and stimulating.

2

Second Language Learning

1. Introduction

The previous chapter dealt with the development in childhood in general terms and the relevance of that to language learning. This chapter offers some explanations about second language acquisition theories: the behaviourist, the innatist and the interactionist. Some of these theories focus on the learner's innate capacity for language acquisition. Others emphasise theories of the environment and interaction in second language acquisition. Still others consider the social context as a crucial factor for language acquisition.

But let us, first, look briefly at the differences between first language (L_1) and second language (L_2) learning. Some of the characteristics of second or foreign language learners will also be touched upon as these learners are different from very young children acquiring their first language.

2. Differences between L1 and L2 learning

What are the differences between L1 and L2 learning?

When we learn our first language (L1) we are likely to learn it in different ways and in different contexts from when we learn a second language (L2). We are also likely to be a different age.

Key concepts

What differences can you think of between L1 and L2 learning? Think about the learners age, ways of learning and *context* that they are learning in.

	L1 learning	L2 learning (in the classroom)
Age	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Baby to young child. (L1) learning lasts into adolescence for some kinds of language and language skills, e.g. academic writing)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Usually at primary school and/or secondary school. It can also start or continue in adulthood.
Ways of learning	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• By exposure to and picking up language.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Sometimes through exposure but often by being taught specific language.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• By wanting and needing to communicate, i.e. with strong motivation.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• With strong, little or no motivation.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Through interaction with family and friends.• By talking about things present in the child's surroundings.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Through interaction with a teacher and sometimes with classmates.• Often by talking about life outside the classroom.

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Context	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • By listening to and taking in language for many months before using it (silent period). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Often by needing to produce language soon after it has been taught.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • By playing and experimenting with new language. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Often by using language in controlled practice activities.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The child hears the language around him/her all the time. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The learner is not exposed to the L2 very much – often no more than about three hours per week.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Family and friends talk to and interact with the child a lot. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Teachers usually simplify their language.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The child has lots of opportunities to experiment with language. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Teachers vary in the amount they praise or encourage learners.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Caretakers* often praise (tell the child he/she has done well) and encourage the child's use of language. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The learner does not receive individual attention from the teacher.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Caretakers simplify their speech to the child. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Teachers generally correct learners a lot.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Caretakers rarely correct the form and accuracy of what the child says in an obvious way. 	

* Caretakers are people who look after a child. Often they are parents. But they may also be brothers or sisters, or other members of the family, etc. (Spratt, Pulverness & Williams, 2008, pp. 48-9).

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It is not always easy to describe L2 learning in the classroom because it happens in different ways in different classrooms. The description in the table above may not be true of all classrooms.

Of course, L2 learning sometimes takes place outside the classroom when children or adults pick up language. In this situation, L2 learning is more similar to L1 learning, except that the learner often does not get as much exposure to the language as the L1 learner and may not be so motivated to learn.

Another big difference between L1 and L2 learning is that L1 learning is nearly always fully successful, while L2 learning varies a lot in how successful it is (Spratt, Pulverness & Williams, 2008).

Key concepts and the language teaching classroom

- Foreign language learners need to be exposed to a rich variety of language, use it to communicate and interact and have opportunities to focus on form. This helps to make the circumstances of L2 learning more similar to those in L1 learning and allows L2 learners (who are usually older than L1 learners) to use their different abilities to process language.
- Motivation is very important in language learning, so we should do all we can to motivate learners.
- Learners are different from one another (in learning style, age, personality, etc. So we should try to personalise our teaching to

match their learning needs and preferences. We can do this by varying our teaching style, approaches, materials, topics, etc.

- Learners may find a silent period useful, but some learners, especially adults, may not.
- We should encourage learners to use English as much as possible in their out-of-class time. This increases their exposure to it. They could, for example, listen to radio programmes or songs, read books or magazines, look at websites, make English-speaking friends, talk to tourists, write to English-speaking penfriends, etc.
- We should try to simplify our language to a level that learners can learn from, and avoid correcting them too much. They need to build up their fluency, motivation and confidence, and have opportunities to pick up and experiment with language.
- In the classroom we should try to praise learners and give them as much individual attention as we can (Spratt, Pulverness& Williams,2008,pp.48-9).

3. Learner Characteristics

Lightbown & Spada (2006) assert, "All second language learners, regardless of age, have already acquired at least one language. This prior knowledge may be an advantage in the sense that they have an idea of how languages work. On the other hand, knowledge of other languages can lead learners to make incorrect

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guesses about how the second language works, and this may result in errors that first language learners would not make" (p. 30). Very young language learners acquire their first language without the cognitive maturity or metalinguistic awareness that older second language learners have.

Adult learners are able to analyse language and compare patterns and forms that are similar or different in their mother language and the foreign language. Adults' very good knowledge of one language may enable them to form hypotheses about the other language. For example, "an English native speaker may hypothesize that past tense verb forms in German (a closely related language) can be either regular or irregular, just as in English" (Pinter, 2006, p. 18). Adults can also make guesses about unfamiliar words from their knowledge of the context and the real world. And they know rules of communication such as opening and closing the conversation. They also use strategies to memorize words and patterns of the language.

These advantages which adults can accomplish are made little or no use of them by children; or perhaps children vary within various age groups as the extent to which they can do so. Young children "will pick up and learn the second or foreign language if they are having fun and if they can work out messages from meaningful contexts. This means learning holistically without attention to abstract language forms" (Pinter, 2006, p. 18).

Very young learners lack the cognitive maturity or metalinguistic awareness which allow older learners to solve problems and engage in discussions about language. "It has been suggested that older learners draw on their problem solving and metalinguistic abilities precisely because they can no longer access the innate language acquisition ability they had as young children" (Lightbown & Spada, 2006, p. 31).

As children grow older, their first language development will enable them to make useful comparisons between languages. For example, their abilities to construct phrases, sentences or questions in their mother tongue will be of much support in the process of learning a foreign language. In addition to these cognitive differences, there are also attitudinal and cultural differences between children and adults. "Most child learners are willing to try to use the language-- even when their proficiency is quite limited. Many adults and adolescents find it stressful when they are unable to express themselves clearly and correctly" (Lightbown & Spada, 2006, p.31).

Differences between teaching young learners and teaching adults can be clearly seen in the motivation factor. Each group studies language for a certain purpose which keeps learners' interests activated. "It has been suggested that gaining an understanding of young learners' needs, interests, and developmental processes takes

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precedence over other considerations that might weigh more heavily in teaching English to adult learners" (Cameron, 2001; Moon, 2000, Rixon, 1992 cited in Kirkgöz, 2006, p. 86). To sustain young learners enthusiasm and keep them motivated, they need praise for their actions. A pleasant environment for learning a foreign language is, therefore, imperative.

Kirgöz (2006) indicates that another difference between teaching young learners and adults lies in the cognitive and affective domains. Halliwell (2000) raises two issues in language development of children: the need to communicate and the child's capacity for indirect learning. She suggests that children need to be provided with occasions in which to communicate. For this purpose, setting up tasks and games is particularly beneficial because they are enjoyable and create a desire to communicate. Through continuous exposure to language tasks, children can pick up and internalize new language items without intentionally being taught by the teacher, as they do when acquiring their first language (L1). It is, therefore, suggested that in the classroom children need to be provided with a breadth of indirect learning focused on making meaning. Another major difference between adults and children is the attention span. Young learners have a relatively shorter attention span than adults (Fisher, 1990; Wood, 1988). Teaching methods, therefore, should hold the children's shorter attention to a task. The pace at which new material

is introduced, and the expected time required for assimilating it can differ significantly with young learners. Activities such as role plays, games, songs, poems, and stories are suggested as more conducive to learning (Murphey, 1992; Toth, 1995; Wright, 1995). As a result of these differences, curricula required for young learners of English must be tailored to the age of the students (Kirkgöz, 2006, p. 86-7).

4. Behaviourism

Classroom activities based on the behaviourist school emphasized mimicry and memorization. Students were supposed to learn dialogues and sentence patterns by heart. "Because language development was viewed as the formation of habits, it was assumed that a person learning a second language would start off with the habits formed in the first language and that these habits would interfere with the new ones needed for the second language" (Lighthown & Spada, 2006, p. 34).

The behaviourist theory had a powerful influence on second/foreign language teaching, especially between 1940s and 1970s. The two proponents of this school, Brooks (1960) and Lado (1964), had great influence on the development of audio-lingual teaching materials and teacher training. By the 1970s, behaviourism began to be considered as inadequate explanation of second language

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acquisition as a result of the growing influence of the innatist views of language acquisition.

5. The Innatist Perspective: Universal Grammar

Chomsky rejected the behaviourist explanation of first language acquisition. Chomsky argued that innate knowledge of the principles of Universal Grammar (UG) permits all children to acquire the language of their environment during a critical period of their development. "The basic idea is that since UG is conceived of as representing the initial state of the language faculty, it can also be understood as a crucial component of the LAID, the language acquisition Device" (Meisel, 2011, p. 17).

Second Language Applications: Krashen's 'Monitor Model'

Krashen's (1982) Monitor Model was influenced by Chomsky's theory of first language acquisition. Krashen described his model in terms of five hypotheses (Lighthown & Spada, 2006, pp. 36-38).

1. The Acquisition-Learning Hypothesis

We acquire language as we are exposed to samples of the second language. Children pick up their first language with no conscious attention to language form. We learn through conscious attention to form and rule learning.

2. The Monitor Hypothesis

The acquired system initiates a speaker's utterances and is responsible for spontaneous language use. The learned system acts as editor or 'monitor', making minor changes and polishing what the acquired system has produced. Such monitoring takes place only when the speaker/writer has plenty of time, is concerned about producing correct language, and has learned the relevant rules.

3. The Natural Order Hypothesis

Second language acquisition unfolds in predictable sequences. The language features that are easiest to state (and thus to learn) are not necessarily the first to be acquired. For example, the rule for adding an-s to the third person singular verbs in the present tense is easy to state, but even some advanced second language speakers fail to apply it in spontaneous conversations.

4. The Input Hypothesis

Acquisition occurs when one is exposed to language that is comprehensible and that contains $i + 1$. The 'i' represents the level of language already acquired, and the '+1' is a metaphor for language (words, grammatical forms, aspects of pronunciation) that is just a step beyond that level.

5. The Affective Filter Hypothesis

The fact that some people who are exposed to large quantities of comprehensible input do not necessarily acquire a language

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successfully is accounted for by Krashen's affective filter hypothesis. The 'affective filter' is a metaphorical barrier that prevents learners from acquiring language even when appropriate input is available. 'Affect' refers to feelings, motives, needs, attitudes, and emotional states. A learner who is tense, anxious, or bored may 'filter out' input, making it unavailable for acquisition (p. 37).

Krashen's ideas were influential during a period when L₂ teaching was in transition from approaches that emphasized learning rules or memorizing dialogues to approaches that emphasized using language with a focus on meaning. Since then, communicative language teaching has been widely implemented.

Classroom research has confirmed that students can make a great deal of progress through exposure to comprehensible input without direct instruction. Studies have also shown, however, that students may reach a point from which they had to make further progress on some features of the second language unless they have access to guided instruction (Spada & Lightbown, 2006, p. 38).

Meaningful Input

It should be made clear that teachers should present language that can be understood by children. Krashen (1982) believes that the input learners receive should be a little bit above their current level; in other words, it should be 'comprehensible input'. Even though the

language is slightly above the learners' level, the input children receive is meaningful and understandable because of the context and the teacher's support. For this reason, Linse (2005) suggests, "It is important for you, as a teacher, to provide young learners with different types of input. For example, if you are telling a story about a family, you could use puppets and change your voice as you become each character. You should use a deep voice as you become the father, a higher voice for the mother, and a softer voice for the baby" (p. 13).

Linse (2005) maintains that there are different ways that you can make input comprehensible:

- Set the stage. Provide context. For example, if you are going to talk about farm animals, you may want to put up a bulletin board of a scene with pictures of cows, chickens, horses, and other animals.
- Build schema by relating a new topic to the students' prior knowledge and experiences.
- Provide a variety of input. Be sure to provide visual, auditory, and tactile input. Use props, realia, and pictures. Feely boxes (boxes with tactile items). Feely boxes (boxes with tactile items inside that children can feel and touch,

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such as items that are hard, soft, furry, smooth, metal, etc.) and headphones at listening centres are often neglected but good sources of input.

- Make the classroom language rich with environmental print such as labels on the wall, posters with words, and children's books.
- Model each instruction as it is given. Be sure to give only one instruction at a time so that children can directly link the instruction with the actual directions (p. 13).

6. Current Psychological Theories

The Cognitive/Developmental Perspective

Information Processing

Cognitive psychologists working in an information-processing model of human learning and performance see second language acquisition as the building up of knowledge that can eventually be called on automatically for speaking and understanding. Segalowitz (2003) and others have suggested that learners have to pay attention at first to any aspect of the language that they are trying to understand or produce. 'Pay attention' in this context is accepted to mean using cognitive resources to process information. However, there is a limit to how much information a learner can pay attention

to. Thus, learners at the earliest stages will use most of their resources to understand the main words in a message. In that situation, they may not notice the grammatical morphemes attached to some of the words, especially those that do not substantially affect meaning. Gradually, through experience and practice, information that was new becomes easier to process, and learners become able to access it quickly and even automatically. This frees them to pay attention to other aspects of the language that, in turn, gradually become automatic.

For proficient speakers, choosing words, pronouncing them, and stringing them together with the appropriate grammatical markers is essentially automatic. When proficient listeners hear a familiar word, even for a split-second, they cannot help but understand it. Such automatic responses do not use up the kind of resources needed for processing new information. Thus, proficient language users can give their full attention to the overall meaning of a text or conversation, whereas learners use more of their attention on processing the meaning of individual words. This helps to explain why second language readers need more time to understand a text, even if they eventually do fully comprehend it (Favreau and Segalowitz 1983). The information processing model suggests that there is a limit to the amount of focused mental activity we can engage in at one time.

Connectionism

Like most cognitive psychologists, connectionists attribute greater importance to the role of the environment than to any specific innate knowledge in the learner, arguing that what is innate is simply the ability to learn, not any specifically linguistic principles. As Ellis (2002) explains, the emphasis is on the frequency with which learners encounter specific linguistic features in the input and the frequency with which features occur together.

Connectionists argue that learners gradually build up their knowledge of language through exposure to the thousands of instances of the linguistic features they eventually hear. After hearing language features in specific situational or linguistic contexts over and over again, learners develop a stronger and stronger network of 'connections' between these elements. Eventually, the presence of one situational or linguistic element will activate the other(s) in the learner's mind. For example, learners might get subject-verb agreement correct, not because they know a rule but because they have heard examples such as 'I say' and 'he says' so often that each subject pronoun activates the correct verb form. Connections like these may be very strong because the elements have occurred together very frequently, or they may be relatively weaker because there have been fewer opportunities to experience them together. Evidence for the connectionist view

comes from the observation that much of the language we use in ordinary conversation is predictable, in some cases to the point of being formulaic. As suggested by Ellis (2003, 2005) and others, language is at least partly learned in chunks larger than single words and not all sentences or phrases are put together one word at a time.

The cognitive developmental perspective has inspired a number of hypotheses, theories, and models for explaining second language acquisition such as the interaction hypothesis, the noticing hypothesis, the input processing and the processability theory.

Second Language Applications

The Interaction Hypothesis

The interaction hypothesis holds that conversational interaction is an essential, if not sufficient, condition for second language acquisition. Researchers (Hatch, 1978; Long, 1983, 1996; Pica, 1994 and Gass 1997) have studied the ways in which speakers adjust their speech to help learners participate in the interaction. Long (1983, 1996), for example illustrated how input could be made comprehensible by using echoic questions. To him, modified interaction is the necessary condition for second language acquisition. Learners need an opportunity to interact with other learners to negotiate meaning and reach mutual comprehension. Through these interactions, interlocutors keep the conversation going.

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Modified interaction does not always involve linguistic simplification. It may also include elaboration, slower speech rate, gesture, or the provision of additional contextual clues (Lightbown & Spada, 2006, p. 44).

Lightbown & Spada (2006) provide some examples of these conversational modifications as follows:

1. Comprehension checks – efforts by the native speaker to ensure that the learner has understood (for example, ‘The bus leaves at 6:30 Do you understand?’).
2. Clarification requests – efforts by the learner to get the native speaker to clarify something that has not been understood (for example, ‘Could you repeat please?’). These requests from the learner lead to further modifications by the native speaker.
3. Self-repetition or paraphrase – the native speaker repeats his or her sentence either partially or in its entirety (for example, ‘She got lost on her way home from school. She was walking home from school. She got lost.’) (p. 44).

In the revisited version of the Interaction Hypothesis (Long, 1996), more emphasis is placed on the importance of corrective feedback during interaction. Interlocutors must ‘negotiate for meaning’, and this leads to language development.

An extension of this thinking is Swain's (1985) ‘Comprehensible output hypothesis’. Swain observed that it is when

learners must produce language that their interlocutors can understand that they are most likely to see the limits of their second language ability and the need to find better ways to express their meaning. The demands of producing comprehensible output, she hypothesized, 'push' learners ahead in their development.

The Noticing Hypothesis

Schmidt (1990, 2001) proposed the 'noticing hypothesis', suggesting that nothing is learned unless it has been noticed. Noticing does not itself result in acquisition, but it is the essential starting point (Lightbown & Spada, 2006, p. 44).

Schmidt hypothesized that second language learners could not begin to acquire a language feature until they had become aware of it in the input.

Input Processing

Bill Van Patten (2004) observed many cases of students misinterpreting sentences. Van Patten argued that the problem arose, in part from the fact that learners have limited processing capacity and cannot pay attention to form and meaning at the same time. Not surprisingly, they tend to give priority to meaning. When the context in which they hear a sentence helps them make sense of it, they do not notice details of the language form.

Processability Theory

Pienemann (1999, 2003) developed his processability theory on the basis of his continued research with learners of different languages in a variety of settings, both instructional and informal. One important aspect of his theory is the integration of developmental sequences with first language influence. He argues that his theory explains a widely reported phenomenon in second language acquisition: learners do not simply transfer features from their first language at early stages of acquisition. Instead, they have to develop a certain level of processing capacity in the second language before they can use their knowledge of the features that already exist in their first language (Lightbown & Spada, 2005, p. 46).

7. The Sociocultural Perspective

Vygotsky's theory assumes that cognitive development, including language development, arises as a result of social interaction. Sociocultural theory views speaking and thinking as tightly interwoven. Speaking and writing mediate thinking, which means that people can gain control over their mental processes as a consequence of internalizing what others say to them and what they say to others. Learning is thought to occur when an individual interacts with an interlocutor within his or her zone of proximal development (SPD) – that is, in a situation in which the learner is

capable of performing at a higher level because there is support from an interlocutor.

One might wonder whether the ZPD is the same as Krashen's $i+1$. Dunn and Lantolf (1998) argue that it is not possible to compare the two concepts because they depend on very different ideas about how development occurs. The ZPD is a metaphorical location or 'site' in which learners co-construct knowledge in collaboration with an interlocutor. In Krashen's $i+1$ the input comes from outside the learner and the emphasis is on the comprehensibility of input that includes language structures that are just beyond the learner's current developmental level. The emphasis in ZPD is on development and how learners co-construct knowledge based on their interaction with their interlocutor in private speech.

Vygotskian theory has also been compared to the interaction hypothesis because of the interlocutor's role in helping learners understand and be understood. These two perspectives differ in the emphasis they place on the internal cognitive process. In the interaction hypothesis, the emphasis is on the individual cognitive processes in the mind of the learner. Interaction facilitates those cognitive processes by giving learners access to the input they need to activate internal processes. In Vygotskian theory, greater importance is attached to the conversations themselves, with learning occurring through the social interaction. Sociocultural

theory holds that people gain control of and re-organize their cognitive processes during mediation as knowledge is internalised during social activity. (For details on current psychological theories see Lightbown & Spada, 2006, pp. 38-48).

8. Summary

In this chapter, the theoretical perspectives on second language acquisition were presented. In particular, the learner's innate capacity for language acquisition, theories of the environment and interaction and the social context which play a role in language acquisition were highlighted. In addition, current psychological theories of second language acquisition were discussed.

3

Learning to Learn

1. Introduction

One of the most important principles of language teaching and learning is "learning to learn". In this global world of ours it is impossible for learners to acquire all skills and knowledge at school. Therefore, one of the major objectives of the school is to teach learners how to learn, to equip them with the strategies they can use outside the classroom, and this should be introduced as early as possible. In this chapter, various suggested techniques and ideas for teaching children how to learn will be offered so that teachers of English for young learners can make use of them in their teaching. These techniques can be adapted to suit all types of learners. Certain important principles from which these strategies are derived are also highlighted.

2. Principles of Learning

Principles of language teaching can enlighten teacher's classroom practice as they form the theoretical background behind teaching practice. The following cognitive principles of L₂ learning interact with sound teaching practice.

1. Automaticity

Children who live in a foreign language environment can learn the language successfully. Brown (2001) remarks,

We commonly attribute children's success to their widely observed tendency to acquire language subconsciously; that is, without overtly analyzing the forms of language themselves. Through an inductive process of exposure to language input and opportunity to experiment with output, they appear to learn languages without 'thinking' about them (p. 55).

This subconscious processing is called **automatic** processing with **peripheral** attention to language forms. (McLaughlin, 1990).

Adults and children must move away from processing language unit by unit, piece by piece, to automatic processing in which language forms (words, affixes, word order, rules, etc) are only on the periphery of attention. Children usually make this transition

faster than adults. Brown calls this principle of language learning and teaching the Principle of Automaticity. "This principle entails efficient and rapid movement away from a focus on the forms of language to a focus on the purposes to which language is put" (Brown, 2001, p. 55).

2. Meaningful Learning

Meaningful learning as opposed to rote learning is related to the cognitive theory of learning. Meaningful learning 'subsumes' new information into existing structures and memory systems, and the resulting associative links create stronger retention. Rote learning – taking in isolated bits and pieces of information that are not connected with one's existing cognitive structure – has little chance of creating long-term retention. Children are good meaningful acquirers of language because they associate sounds, words, structures, and discourse element with that which is relevant and important in their daily quest for knowledge and survival.

As Brown (2001) puts it, "The Principle of Meaningful Learning is quite simply stated as follows: Meaningful learning will lead toward better long-term retention than rote learning" (p. 57).

3. The Anticipation of Reward

According to Skinner, the anticipation of reward is the most powerful factor in directing one's behaviours. The reward principle

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can be stated as follows: "Human beings are universally driven to act; or 'behave', by the anticipation of some sort of reward – tangible or intangible, short term or long term – that will ensue as a result of the behavior" (Brown, 2001, p. 58).

This principle implies the importance of the use of such rewards as praise for correct responses (very good, nice job, appropriate grades or scores to indicate success). In classes with very low motivation, short-term reminders of progress may help students to perceive their development. Gold stars and stickers (especially for young learners), issuing certain 'privileges' for good work, and progress charts and graphs may spark some interest (Brown, 2001, p. 58).

4. Intrinsic Motivation

Simply stated, the Intrinsic Motivation principle is: The most powerful rewards are those that are intrinsically motivated within the learner. Because the behaviour stems from needs, wants, or desires within oneself, the behaviour itself is self-rewarding; therefore, no externally administered reward is necessary.

Classroom techniques have a much greater chance for success if they are self-rewarding in the perception of the learner. The learners perform the task because it is fun, interesting, useful, or challenging, and not because they anticipate cognitive or affective reward, from the teacher (Brown, 2001, p. 59).

3. Strategies of learning to learn

The principles of learning to learn cover variety of activities, tasks or interactions between children and the teacher. Pinter (2005) presents the following types of strategies that can be developed for learning to learn:

1. Social and affective strategies: to raise awareness about how learners' own emotional states and feelings as well as those of others can influence their learning. Activities in the classroom can include teacher-led discussions, usually in the mother tongue, about the social aspects of learning, such as the importance of listening to each other, turn taking in games, or controlling shyness and fear of speaking out in front of others. As part of developing awareness about affective factors, teachers can give plenty of praise and positive feedback to children to raise their self-esteem and self-confidence as well as boost their motivation.

2. Strategies related to raising awareness about what language learning is: to cover general understanding about language learning. In terms of understanding what language learning means, teachers might discuss with children how long it takes to learn a language, why it is important to practise, or why we all make mistakes.

3. Metacognitive strategies: to introduce and develop the ongoing process of reflection through planning, monitoring, and evaluating language learning. Activities in the classroom can include

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encouraging children to think about what they did well and why, and what they enjoyed and why. At later stages, children can be prompted to think about the reasons for doing various activities and tasks and about lessons that can be learnt from each learning experience.

4. Direct or cognitive strategies: to develop children's ability to deal with linguistic information in an effective way, i.e. to organize, categorize, or memorize linguistic information. Activities in the classroom can include training strategies such as how to remember a list of words, how to guess the meaning of unknown words in a text, or how to link unrelated language to aid memory (p. 100).

These strategies can be introduced in an order, where teachers can start with emotions, feelings, and boosting self-esteem. Metacognitive strategies can then be introduced, and the cognitive strategies with older learners can be added. Pinter, however, indicates that this does not mean that "this order must always be followed" (p. 100). It is left to the discretion of the teacher to decide what is appropriate and feasible to use.

4. Developing Social and Affective Strategies

Teachers of young learners are concerned with building confidence and raising self-esteem, which are likely to foster positive attitudes towards learning. "The teacher can be an important

role model, displaying positive, cheerful behaviour and friendliness at all times". (Pinter, 2006, p. 101). In this respect the teacher acts as a source of motivation for younger learners. In order to foster self-esteem, teachers should emphasize what children can do rather than why they cannot do. "Asking children's opinions about the English lessons and their own progress are fundamental parts of building self-reliance and awareness. Gaining experience in expressing their opinions is a good foundation for self-assessment" (Pinter, 2006, P. 101). When children write reflection notes about their progress, the focus should be on what has been achieved rather than on weaknesses or gaps. Pinter (2006) insists,

Evaluation sheets should always be phrased in a positive way such as:

- I can sing a song.
- I can tell a story.
- I can talk about my family/ friend.
- I can write a postcard.
- I can (p. 101).

When commenting on children's performance, teachers should:

- Provide positive reinforcement.

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- Show their appreciation by displaying children's work on the wall or by giving feedback.

Teachers should allow students to express their feelings and talk about events which affect them such as lost pets or the birth of a brother or sister. This will give young learners a sense of security as long as the teacher knows something about their concerns.

For the social development of children, it is important for teachers

- to be sensitive to individuals and friendship groupings.
- to promote cooperation, listening and turn taking to develop children's skills in working in pairs or groups.
- to train children to be tolerant.
- to draw up class rules of acceptable behaviour.

As for language learning, it is important to talk about learning expectations such as how much learners can learn in a week, a month, or a year, or what learners will be able to do in English by the end of the year.

5. Metacognitive Strategies

Learning to Reflect

Children need to understand and reflect on the activities they have to do such as: listening to a spoken text or listening to the teacher talking, answering questions, writing a short paragraph and

so on. It is important that children begin to understand the logic behind getting involved in such activities and how they can participate effectively. This sort of reflection ensures effective learning; it can be used at the level of tasks, lessons, units, and at the end of the year.

Pinter (2006) gives an example of what children, involved in a dialogue or role play, can think about. "It would be possible to think about whether each speaker contributed fully, whether they listened to each other, whether they rehearsed effectively, or whether they managed to control their nervousness in front of the class" (p. 104).

Furthermore, it is important for teachers and learners to think of what has been achieved at the end of the term as another form of reflection to develop the metacognitive awareness of self-assessment.

Coursebooks for children often display explicit reflection by introducing the 'journal' which prompts them to complete sentences such as these:

1. My earliest memory is when I.....
2. Words that describe me are and
3. One thing I haven't done that I want to do is to
4. Now that I have completed this unit, I can

(Herrera and Zanatta, 2001 cited in Pinter 2006, p. 105).

Activities for younger children to reflect on their learning may start by asking children to decide which activities they liked and enjoyed most. It is also useful for children to think about reasons behind their choice of favourite activities; this will encourage them to think for themselves.

Explicit thinking about the process of learning can be arranged for older children. The teacher, for example, could help children to think at each stage of the activity and this will foster metacognitive growth. In this respect, Pinter (2006) explains, "Let us imagine that a teacher wants a group of ten-year-olds to play a guessing game in which they ask questions to guess what the teacher has got in a 'magic box': Before starting the game, the teacher might want to think together with the children about how to play the game" (p. 108).

6. Developing Cognitive Strategies

There are certain cognitive strategies to help children in learning such as "organizing, rehearsing, using different visual and other meaningful clues, predicting and using deduction while listening or reading. For example, children will have to memorize and categorize words, learn rhymes by heart, or predict information while listening to a story" (Pinter, 2006, p. 109).

Cognitive rehearsal strategies for performing short dialogues for the younger stage groups may be developed slowly and gradually.

The development of predicting skills is another cognitive strategy to be learnt at an earlier stage. This strategy can be used during storytelling sessions, for instance, and other situations as well, by asking children to say what they think will happen next.

For using organization strategies, children can be asked to organize vocabulary by drawing, cutting and sticking pictures on certain pages. This provides an example of a categorization strategy.

7. Fostering Independent Learning

For fostering independence, teachers will have to give up total control of the classroom and involve children to make decisions and choices. This “will motivate them and lead to more active involvement and more enjoyable learning” (Pinter, 2006, p. 110). It also means their interests and opinions are valued by the teacher.

Pinter (2006) indicates that only limited choices should be given to children at the beginning. He suggests, “For the youngest group, when teachers introduce vocabulary such as ‘wild animals’ it is a good idea to let children brainstorm the mother tongue names of animals that they want to learn rather than present them with a predetermined list. They may have their favourite animals” (p. 111). It is possible to give children two or three tasks and give them a choice of which animal they want to discuss.

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Pinter (2006) suggests other ways to encourage children's involvement through respecting their choices;

- Teachers can set freer homework tasks. For example children can learn three new vocabulary items of their own choice every week on top of what is learnt by everybody.
- Children can look words up in a picture dictionary, ask their older siblings for ideas, or choose words or phrases from their favourite comics or books or even the Internet.
- In class children can make displays of their words and/ or keep a personal vocabulary book. What matters is that their own involvement in choosing these words will make the language more relevant to them and this will increase the likelihood of remembering and learning. At the beginning of the next lesson children can be put into small groups to tell each other what new words they learnt (p.112).

Such strategies and activities are more likely to encourage children independence and cater for their interests and needs. Children's awareness about their learning should be taken into consideration. Thus, "Raising awareness about the learning process, developing language learning strategies, and giving children some freedom in their learning, are all principles which, taken together,

can foster independent learning in classrooms”(Pinter, 2006, p. 112). Thus, teachers should raise children’s awareness, prepare them for future learning and encourage their reflective attitude to learning.

8. How Should the Teaching and Learning be Done?

Five Principles for Teaching Beginners

One way to answer this question is through a set of principles. Here are five principles that are particularly relevant to the teaching of beginners:

- 1 **Meaning:** Focus on meaningful and relevant language
- 2 **Interest:** Maintain interest through a variety of activities
- 3 **New language:** Avoid overloading learners with too much new language
- 4 **Understanding:** Provide plenty of comprehensible input
- 5 **Stress-free:** Create a friendly, safe, cooperative classroom environment (Nation & Newton, 2009, pp. 19-22).

Notice that the first letter for each of the key words spells out the acronym “MINUS”. This provides a useful aid for remembering the principles. We now discuss the principles in relation to the teaching of absolute beginners in an ESL context. This is, of course, only one of many contexts for teaching beginners, and so readers will need to consider its relevance to their particular teaching context, and how the examples can be adapted to suit this context.

Principle 1. Focus on Meaningful and Relevant Content

The main focus should be on language that the learners can use quickly for their purposes rather than on too much grammar explanation or on words that are not directly useful. Here are some simple sentences that can be learnt very early in a course so that the learners can use them straight away:

My name is -----.

I come from -----.

I live in -----.

My address is -----.

The teacher could present these sentences orally, one by one, with gestures and lots of repetition and learner involvement. The sentences could then be written on a whiteboard so that the learners can write them down. The written versions then become the basis for pair work. The first aim of this learning is for learners to be able to say these things about themselves without looking at the written version, and to understand other learners when they use them. The second aim is for learners to begin to link the written and spoken forms of the words. For learners who are not very familiar with the written form of English, recognising the written form of their name and address is an important early step in building literacy.

One way of checking the usefulness of a phrase or word is to use a computer concordancer to see how many examples of the item can

be found in a collection of spoken texts. A useful starting point is <http://www.lex tutor.ca/concordancers/>.

One of the most useful techniques in a listening and speaking programme is the teacher engaging in meaning-focused dialogue with the learners. This dialogue can have many different focuses.

1. *Classroom management*. Perhaps the most realistic kind of dialogue involves the day-to-day running of the classroom. This includes: (1) organising classroom work such as forming groups, using the course book, and calling on learners to perform tasks; (2) keeping control of noise and behaviour; (3) checking attendance; and (4) thanking and praising.

2. *Informal conversation*. The teacher and learners talk about things that happened outside school. Where appropriate this can be about the learner's family, their hobbies, how they travel to school, favourite food, and so on.

3. *Recalling previous lessons*. The teacher and learners talk about previous class work. This draws on what is hopefully known and familiar and also provides opportunities for revision.

4. *Finding out learners' opinions and ideas*. During an activity the teacher can ask the learners if they like the particular activity and if they want to do more of it. This dialogue can be the early beginnings of a partly negotiated syllabus.

Principle 2. Maintain Interest Through a Variety of Activities

To maintain learners' interest, activities need to be short and varied, and to involve the learners in responding to or using the language. Here are some simple ways to keep learners interested in learning:

- do activities that involve movement
- use real objects and pictures
- plan trips outside the classroom, for example, a trip to a local supermarket linked to a simple food search game
- use songs and simple chants in between other more demanding activities
- introduce and practise new content through games such as bingo.

Principle 3. Avoid Overloading Learners with Too Much New Language

There is usually little need to focus on grammar in the early parts of a course for beginners. Instead lessons should focus on learning set phrases and words. Teachers often make the mistake of introducing too much new language without giving learners enough opportunities to gain control over this language. A simple rule to keep in mind is "*learn a little, use a lot*".

For example, if the goal is to learn the names for parts of the body, it is better to focus on the most useful words such as *head*,

neck, arms, hands, legs, feet, and so on, and to avoid less common words such as *elbow* and *ankle*. Note that introducing *elbow* and *ankle* at the same time creates another problem; the similarities between these words (i.e., they sound a bit the same and their meanings are related) is likely to lead to learners confusing each word for the other.

To apply the principle of “*learn a little, use a lot*”, the body words need to be practised in a variety of ways. These could include picture games, information transfer activities, action games (“Simon says . . .”), and bingo. The words can then be used in simple sentence patterns and dialogues such as “*How are you? Not so good. My..... hurts*”.

Principle 4. Provide Plenty of Comprehensible Input

Note that most of these activities mentioned above first involve learners in learning the words through listening and doing before they deepen their learning through using the words in guided speaking. If speaking is pushed too early, learners may be more likely to transfer L1 phonology and to concentrate on mechanical difficulties. Activities like listen and do, picture ordering, bingo and information transfer show how listening can be practised in very active ways without requiring much speaking.

Learning to Learn

To ensure that input can be understood requires the use of visual aids and contextual support for new language including pictures, gestures, mime, objects, and experiences out of class. Teachers also need to think carefully about the language they use in class with the aim of keeping their talk simple but not simplistic or ungrammatical. One way to do this is to always use one form for one meaning. Thus, for example, the teacher needs to decide whether to use “My name is-----” or “I am-----”, but not both; “Where are you from?” or “Where do you come from?”, but not both.

Early in the course learners can also learn simple phrases for controlling input such as, “*Sorry, I don’t understand*”, “*Please say it again*”. Displaying these phrases on a large poster makes them readily available throughout a course.

Most of these ideas assume a context in which learners speak a variety of first languages, or the teacher does not speak the learners’ first language. Of course, teaching beginners is easier if the learners all speak the same first language and the teacher speaks the first language of the learners.

Using translation to convey the meanings of words and phrases is very efficient and is well supported by research as an effective way of communicating meaning. The main disadvantage is that the teacher and learners are tempted to use a lot of classroom time using the first language instead of the second language. However, as long

as the teacher is aware of this danger, then using the first language is a good thing to do and saves a lot of time.

If the learners do not all speak the same first language, and if the teacher does not speak the first language of the learners, then pictures, gestures and the use of context need to be used to get meaning across. This is not as difficult as it sounds, and if the learners also have a well-illustrated course book, the job is easier.

Older learners may make use of bilingual dictionaries which give the meanings of second language words in the learners' first language. These dictionaries differ a lot in quality, but they are extremely useful learning aids. Learners need to have a second language vocabulary of at least 2000 words before they can use monolingual dictionaries where meanings are given in the second language. This is because a vocabulary of around 2000 words is needed to write and understand definitions.

Principle 5. Create a Friendly, Safe, Cooperative Classroom Environment

There is strong evidence that anxiety influences learners' willingness to communicate in a second language (e.g., Yashima, 2002). Therefore, it is particularly important that, in the early stages of learning a second language, learners have successful, low stress learning experiences. By paying attention to the first four principles,

there is a very good chance that these experiences will be plentiful, and that the teacher will already be meeting this fifth principle. Some of the factors that contribute to a positive beginners' classroom are variety, movement, physical comfort, frequent interaction, successful language experiences, and opportunities for learners to experiment and make mistakes without penalties.

9. Summary

Children should be helped how to reflect on their own learning and evaluate their performance. Even the youngest children will be able to respond to the procedures of 'learning to learn' with the help of their teacher.

Activities that are designed on the basis of this principle will gradually lead children to learn useful learning skills, raise their awareness and promote self-confidence. In this chapter, principles and techniques for teaching children how to learn were presented and illustrated.

4

Teaching Listening to Young Learners

1. Introduction

In this chapter, a background for the teaching of listening to young learners will be presented. Listening as a basic skill for the development of other language skills is then discussed. Various types of classroom techniques and activities will be suggested.

2. Background to the Teaching of Listening

In mother language learning, children learn languages by listening and then by speaking. Similarly in foreign language learning, an emphasis should be placed on listening and then speaking. Plenty of listening practice and opportunities to listen should be provided so that such rich input will naturally lead to speaking.

The teacher plays a key role in providing language input for children by talking, singing, chatting, dramatizing dialogues,

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giving instructions, and telling stories. In addition, children might also listen to audio tapes which usually come with their textbooks. Good quality tapes should be provided to teachers, especially if they lack an appropriate language proficiency level (Pinter, 2006).

Listening as an active skill imposes certain problems. It is important to deal with listening difficulties and introduce these sources of problems gradually for young learners. These difficulties are related to the type and length of the text the children listen to and the familiarity of the person to whom they are listening. Actually, listening to the teacher is easier than listening to recordings as teachers can adjust their speech to young learners and modify their language.

They can also repeat messages, use gestures and facial expressions to enable children to understand the meaning. Moreover, children's responses to teacher's instructions before, while, or after they listen play an important role in effective listening.

Support with Listening

Teachers can provide listening tasks that deal with the context of familiar games, stories and action rhymes using gestures and visuals; such tasks do not require them to infer the context or topic, a skill which is difficult for them to acquire.

Children should be given tasks that do not require them to manipulate linguistic features such as translating, analysing phrases. Easier activities such as 'listen and do' should be provided instead. Activities which ask children to 'listen and read' enable children to follow the text on the page as they listen (Pinter, 2006).

Teacher Talk

Teachers provide rich language input in the target language classroom as they often talk a lot. This input helps learners to get used to the intonation patterns and the sounds of language. Teachers often talk and comment on what is going on as they point to pictures or as they mime something.

Children try to figure out what is going on from the context, the gestures, and the visual aids as they listen and absorb the language just as they usually do in learning the mother tongue. Children may respond to the teacher's comments in their mother tongue because they cannot yet use the target language well. The teacher may accept this and encourage them by confirming their guesses and incorporates their responses into English.

An important feature of teacher talk is the affective function where teachers use a lot of praise and encouragement and model social conventions such as greeting children whenever they start the lesson (Pinter, 2006).

Modifications of Language

When adults or children interact with their teachers in any language, some sort of communication breakdowns are inevitable. This often happens when participants do not always understand one another. In order to repair or avoid communication breakdowns, modifications of language become essential. This sort of modification to solve misunderstanding, such as the use of repetitions, comprehension checks, clarification requests and confirmation checks, illustrates what is often referred to in the literature as the 'negotiation of meaning' (Long 1983), which is conducive to second language acquisition (Pinter, 2006. For modified interaction. (See chapter 2, p.50 in this book.)

3. Developing Listening Skills

When children become able to follow certain instructions, they become ready to develop other language skills. The teacher, therefore, should be aware of his children's ability to follow simple instructions, which constitutes one of the basic listening readiness. For example, listening for simple instructions such as 'open your activity book' can prepare children for academic tasks. Listening to an oral sequence of events such as 'Lucy went to the and took out some milk' prepares children to comprehend stories.

The skill of being able to discriminate between sounds such as /b/ and /p/ prepares children for phonic instructions. And when children can segment words into syllables such as 'ap-ple' or 'dinner', they become prepared to decode words and listen for phonic instructions as well. Thus other skills are built on listening. As Linse (2005) argues, "You need to hear a word before you can say it. You need to say a word before you can read it. You need to read a word before you can write it" (p. 27).

Other activities incorporate listening and reading. Children listen to a passage and then answer questions that they hear on an audio recording. This can only be done when children have the literary skills to do the exercise. Children, for example, "would have to be able to read the irregular spelling pattern *ph* for the sound /f/ in order to recognize the word dolphin" (Linse, 2005, p. 41).

Children need to be trained to listen to English sounds so that they will be able to match the sound with a specific letter or symbol. Unless children develop phonological awareness, they can be confused when they begin reading. Learning how to listen to sounds first then is a pre-requisite for looking at the print. In English, there are many single syllable words that rhyme. Rhymes can be found in songs, finger-plays and chants. "By learning to recognize rhyming words, children will be in a better position to decode and read words that follow a similar pattern" (Linse, 2005, p. 29).

4. Classroom Techniques and Activities

Total Physical Response (TPR)

Asher (1977) observed, "Very young children were so good at developing language skills when students in college and university classes had so much difficulty" (Linse, 2005, p. 30). Asher believed that infants are active users of the language because they physically respond to what they hear, and babies spend the first year of their life listening to language.

These observations led James J. Asher (1977) to develop a method known as Total Physical Response (TPR). The main feature of the method entails that learners physically respond to oral commands. "Just as with babies, learners are expected to respond non-verbally to commands before they are expected to speak" (Linse, 2005, p. 30).

Children watch the teacher giving an oral command while demonstrating it. Then, they respond physically when they hear the command again. For example, when they hear a command like 'jump' they respond physically by jumping. Later when children start to speak, they repeat the commands.

Linse (2005) points out several positive aspects of the TPR method:

First, it utilizes the auditory, visual, and tactile learning channels. The learners listen and watch as the commands are given. Later, the learner have a chance to use all three channels: they listen, watch one another, and do the commands themselves. Second, TPR helps to teach children to follow directions and listen attentively -- two important skills for academic success. Third, in keeping with developmentally appropriate notions or thoughts, children are allowed to listen and then choose when they feel comfortable to start speaking. Fourth, this method can easily be adapted in many different ways for young learners (p. 30).

The TPR method can be used in a variety of ways with young learners. One-word commands, such as *jump*, *stand*, *wave* can be used at the beginning, and more complicated commands can be introduced later. The teacher should think about the language level and the interest of the children; for example, whether the words are too difficult or too simple. He should also try to make sure that the grammar is clear and illustrated with the commands. Real objects or pictures will make the activity appealing to children. Linse (2005) suggests, "When using TPR with five-, six-, or seven-year-olds, be sure to give only one command at a time. As a teacher of young learners, you need to be aware that some children, especially five-,

six, or seven-year-olds, will have trouble paying attention to multi-step instructions due to their development” (pp. 31-32).

When the teacher waits for all children to follow the instruction the children will easily link the instructional language with the action. When the instructions are clear, the teacher can make sure if the children are comprehending the language.

TPR Songs and Finger-Plays

Linse (2005) maintains that TPR can be used with songs and finger plays (see Appendix 5) which are little chants that children say while moving their fingers and/or hands. Linse (2005) gives the following example of a popular-finger play. At first, the teacher chants the finger-play as the children use their hands and their fingers to point to the correct body parts. After they understand the chant, the children can chant and point the finger-play.

Heads and Shoulders

Head and shoulders, knees and toes, knees and toes,
head and shoulders, knees and toes, knees and toes,
eyes and ears and mouth and nose.

Head and shoulders, knees and toes, knees and toes.
(p. 32).

The teacher should make sure that the chant is meaningful to children.

Syllable Clapping

Syllable Clapping helps children become more aware of the auditory patterns that occur in language. Linse (2005) suggests that pupils chant the words while the teacher claps them in syllables.

For example, for the two-syllable word happy, you would clap when you say hap- and you would clap again when you say -py. This is useful for the tactile learners as well as auditory learners. To make this more accessible to the visual learners, you may want to show pictures of the words being clapped. The teacher may demonstrate being 'happy' or 'angry' as the rest of the children clap and chant the words (p. 38).

Minimal Pairs

"Minimal Pairs are two words that differ in only one sound. For example, *hat* and *pat* are minimal pairs. One way to practice minimal pair distinction is to have your learners listen to two words and tell whether they are the same or different by holding up the *yes/no* cards. For example, students might have to discriminate between *b* and *p* or between the short *i* and long *e* sounds" (Linse, 2005, p. 39). Pictures can be used to make minimal pair technique

meaningful (Murphy, 2003). A minimal pair with the words 'ship' and 'sheep', for example, can be better illustrated with picture cards.

5. Listening Activities for Younger Learners

For younger children, activities which require non-verbal responses help children practise listening skills and tune them into English. For example, children listen to rhymes or action stories and enjoy them by miming the actions rather than producing the language. Pinter (2006) believes, "the nonverbal contributions help them make sense of the content. The important principle is that children have the opportunity to absorb the language before they have to say anything" (p. 50). According to the Total Physical Response (TPR) approach to language learning, learners respond to language input by non-verbal responses. They just hear the language and respond to it by physical actions.

Listening practice in the early years can be arranged according to TPR approach. Activities can be classified into 'listen and do' activities, listening for information, listen and repeat activities, listening to stories and listening independently. Some activities are designed in the shape of 'listen and respond' games such as 'listen and clap your hands' or 'Simon says'. Other activities include 'Listen and draw the picture' or 'listen and colour' in the clown's

clothes. Yet other exercises include simple ticking or circling or require some writing such as true and false.

Many activities focus on '*listen and do*' exercises with an end product such as a picture, a colourful clown, or an animal. In such activities the teacher can monitor what children have understood from the listening text. Pinter (2006) indicates, "These activities not only give excellent listening practice but also offer some opportunities for incorporating into the English class multiple intelligences through sticking, colouring, and making simple objects" (p. 51).

1. 'Listen and Do' Activities

'Listen and Do' activities are used in most classrooms and are the basis of Total Physical Response language teaching (Asher, Kosudo and de la Torre, 1974, referred to in Nation & Newton, 2009, p. 29). In these activities the teacher gives commands or makes statements and the learners do what the teacher says. There are many possible variations on these activities. They can become speaking activities with the learners saying what to do and the teacher or another learner doing the action. In positioning, some of the learners see a photograph or picture and have to tell other learners how to position themselves to appear like the people in the picture. This can also include the expressions on their faces (Hughes, 1985).

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Blindfolded learners may be guided through a series of minor obstacles by following the spoken instructions of others.

Bingo is a very adaptable activity that provides learners with lots of listening and vocabulary practice. In "body part bingo" (McKay and Tom, 1999) the teacher first reads simple descriptions of main body parts and learners guess what is being referred to. Learners then draw a grid with the required number of boxes (3×3 , 5×5 , etc.) for the number of body parts.

The teacher dictates the names of the body parts and the learners fill in the grid in any order with these names. The game begins with the teacher reading out descriptions of body parts in random order and the learners covering the matching words. The first learner to cover a row in any direction calls out "body". He or she then reads back the covered words.

Instructions

Giving genuine instructions is one of the most obvious 'listen and do' activities as this is a common type of activity in the language classroom. By carrying out the instructions, learners can demonstrate if they have understood the message or not. Such instructions help to introduce language with the support from the teacher's gestures and illustrations which would enable children grasp the meaning.

Moving About

'Listen and do' exercises might require children to physically move about. "The younger your pupils, the more physical activities they need. Children need exercise and movement, and you should make use of this wherever possible" (Scott & Ytreberg, 2001, p. 22). For example, you can ask your pupils to walk to the board and come back. Try to use classroom vocabulary, movement words, counting, spelling, etc. Pupils learn from each other. If they haven't understood the first time, they'll still be able to do the activity by watching the others. As pupils learn more and more language, you can let them take over the role of 'instructor'. They are very good at it.

Mime Stories

In a mime story the teacher tells the story and the pupils and the teacher do the actions. It again provides physical movement and gives the teacher a chance to play along with the pupils. Here's a very simple example of a mime story:

We're sitting in a boat, a small rowing boat. Let's row. We row and row. Now what's that? A bird. A big bird flying over the water. Now it's gone. We keep rowing. Can we see the bird? No, no bird. This is hard work. Row, row. We're tired. We row row slowly. There's the shore. Let's go home now. We're so tired. We're dragging our feet. We're tired. We want to go to

sleep. We lie down on our beds. We close our eyes, and.....
shhhh..... we're asleep (Scott & Ytreberg, 2001, p. 23).

Drawing

'Listen and draw' is a favourite type of listening activity in almost all classes, but remember that drawing takes time, so keep the pictures simple. In 'listen and draw' activities the teacher, or one of the pupils, tells the other pupils what to draw. You can make up a picture or describe a picture you have in front of you. This activity is particularly useful for checking object vocabulary, prepositions, colours and numbers. It is not so useful for actions, since drawing people doing things is quite difficult for most of us. (For details on 'listen and do' activities see Scott and Ytreberg, 2001, pp. 22-24.)

2. Listening for Information

'Listening for information' is really an umbrella heading which covers a very wide range of listening activities. However, we are taking it to mean listening for detail, for specific information. These activities are often used to check what the pupils know, but they can also be used to give new information. (For details on 'listening for information, see Scott and Ytreberg, 2001, pp. 24-26.)

Identifying Exercises Identifying exercises requires students to guess the thing being described while listening, such as in the following exercise taken from *English for Starters 9*:

Listen and guess the three countries being described. Choose from:

India, China, Mexico, Japan, the USA, Australia (Kedde & Hobbs, 2012, p.31).

Listen for the Mistake

You can use the picture in your book but make mistakes in the text you read, so that pupils have to listen for the mistakes. The same can be done using the correct text and the wrong picture, but this takes a bit more time to prepare.

Putting Things in Order

Pupils have a number of pictures which illustrate a text in front of them. The pictures are not in the right order. Pupils listen to the text and put the pictures in the order they think is right.

Listen and Colour

Children love colouring pictures and we can easily make this activity into a listening activity. We can use any picture which the pupils have in their workbook.

3. 'Listen and Repeat' Activities

'Listen and repeat' exercises are great fun and give the pupils the chance to get a feel for the language: the sounds, the stress and rhythm and the intonation. When done in combination with

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movements or with objects or pictures, this type of activity also helps to establish the link between words and meaning.

Rhymes

All children love rhymes and like to repeat them again and again. Here you can use either traditional rhymes or modern rhymes, and you really don't have to worry too much about the grading. Rhymes are repetitive, they have natural rhythm and they have an element of fun, or playing with the language.

Children play with language in their mother tongue, so this is a familiar part of their world, and it has an important part to play in their learning process (Scott and Ytreberg, 2001, p.27).

4. Listening to Stories

Teachers can use story telling as an additional listening practice as the most authentic and popular activity for all children. In story telling, children learn language and enjoy listening to it as stories usually contain repetition which helps children acquire the input easily. Similarly, songs, rhymes and stories often use repetition to make the input easily accessible.

Listening to stories, rhymes, and songs can also lead to learning the words and phrases by heart and this can be very useful because songs and rhymes contain reasonably fast connected speech in

English, with shortened sounds and the use of 'schwa' [ə], such as in 'cutter' [kʌtə]." (Pinter, 2006, p. 53).

6. Listening Activities for Older Learners

At the beginning stages, the majority of the previous activities for young learners can also be used with older learners, and the instructions might become more challenging.

Storytelling is also an enjoyable technique for older children provided that stories are suitable for their age level. 'With older learners, it is a good idea to introduce tapes rather than just the teacher's input because children will have to get used to faster speech, unfamiliar speakers, and different accents. Activities used with younger learners can be adapted for older ones by increasing the level of difficulty. For example, within the category of 'listen and do' it is possible to introduce activities which require quite a lot of processing, such as 'listen and identify one person', where the learners have to listen to a passage and work out which person is being described. The more people there are to choose from, the more difficult the task is" (Pinter, 2006, pp. 53-54).

'The kind of output required determines the difficulty of the task. For example, younger learners may be asked to listen to the story and respond to short questions while older learner can rewrite the story and act it out. Older children can make predictions and

guessing more reliable and make certain assumptions about the content of the text. Children, for instance, can look at the photos and guess what people are doing. They listen and find out whether their predictions were right. Next, they listen, for the third time to focus on different aspects of the text. It should be noted that such tasks do not imply that learners need to understand every single word. "As long as the learners can complete the task, the listening has been useful and successful" (Pinter, 2006, p. 54).

7. Summary

In this chapter, factors related to the teaching of listening to young learners were pointed out, such as the teacher's key role in providing input for children, teacher talk and support, and listening difficulties. The links between the development of listening skills and other language skills were also presented. Suggestions for using certain listening activities in the classroom were provided including the use of variety of activities in light of the total physical response approach.

Finally, it should be mentioned that mastery of listening skills can be the basis for effective speaking practice. Listening and speaking skills should be combined through meaningful activities. It is important for teachers to integrate listening and speaking practice in the classroom. It is to the speaking skills that we now turn in the following chapter.

5

Teaching Speaking to Young Learners

1. Introduction

This chapter begins with a description of how children experiment and play with language. It then considers the development of children's speaking abilities. This is followed by presentation of techniques and classroom activities for the teaching of speaking skills for young learners. Then speaking activities for both younger and older learners are dealt with. Procedures for choosing, negotiating and carrying out speaking tasks are suggested.

2. What is Speaking for Young Learners

Speaking is another important skill for young learners besides listening. Listening skills can lead to initial speaking practice; therefore, listening and speaking skills should be combined together for meaningful practice. To be able to speak, both younger and older learners should be encouraged to practise speaking. Listening and speaking activities should be planned according to the learner's age, abilities and interests.

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In their first attempt to speak, children play with words and rhymes of language. "They experiment and play with the utterances that are made from words and phrases such as *bye-bye*, or *go bye-bye*" (Linse, 2005, p. 46). At a later stage of their growth, children use these words and structures in their imaginary play. Linse maintains that as play is important in first language acquisition, it is also important in children's second language development. Children practise language through role-playing at school or home as a form of entertainment. In their play, they practise conversation, add words or structures that they have heard from adults or on TV.

Children would enjoy saying finger-plays, simple chants and rhymes with hand or finger motions. They also sing songs in unison with their teacher. Repetitive language is a marked feature of many of the songs and finger-plays that children say. The following example, taken from Linse (2005), contains much repetitions. Children can also mime the actions and learn the repetitive lyrics of songs:

This is the way we wash our clothes

This is the way we wash our clothes, wash our clothes,
wash our clothes.

This is the way we wash our clothes, wash our clothes, so
early Monday morning.

This is the way we iron our clothes, iron our clothes, iron our clothes.

This is the way we iron our clothes so early Tuesday morning.

Children can be encouraged to create their own verses or versions of songs (p. 48).

3. Development of Speaking Skills

Speaking fluently constitutes a big challenge for learners as they have to speak and think at the same time. As speakers, we monitor our speech and correct any mistakes as well as planning for what to say next. Speaking in a foreign language requires a lot of practice starting with practising and drilling set phrases and repeating model structures. Classroom practice makes use of these repetitive exercises to a great deal of time.

Speakers have also to learn other language sub-skills, such as how to use appropriate language in certain situations, to manage conversations, and to interrupt and offer their contributions.

Children may lack the ability to communicate well even in their mother tongue. They may not be able to know the rules of using appropriate language in certain situations such as how to be polite and when to interrupt other speakers. Teachers need, therefore, to

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know first what children can do in their first language. Pinter (2006) suggests, "At the beginning stages with children it is a good idea to focus on simple but purposeful and meaningful pattern drilling and personalized dialogue building in order to prepare them to be able to talk about themselves and their world and to begin to interact with their friends in class and other speakers of the language"(p. 56).

Younger learners learn pronunciation better than older learners when they begin learning English as a foreign or a second language (Birdsong, 1999). However, young learners have some difficulty with certain sounds such as /s/ /th/ sounds. Linse (2005) suggests that the teacher should not focus on sounds that are troublesome for children until they are 10 or 11 years old.

Children are expected to produce utterances that are tailored to their development. The mean-length of utterances for a five-year-old is not the same for a 10-year old. "A five-year old might say, 'Do I have to go?'; whereas a 10-year-old might say, 'Yeah, I know I was supposed to go five minutes ago'." (Linse, 2005, p. 50). The teacher should be aware of the fact that children should not be expected to produce utterances beyond their stage of development.

4. Classroom Techniques and Activities

Audio Lingual Method (ALM)

One of the basic techniques of the audio-lingual method is developing habits based on the patterns of language (Celce-Murcia, 2001).

For young learners drills with choral response and dialogues are two important features of ALM. Drills aim at getting learners to practise patterns of language. Substitution drills are typical of the ALM:

Example

Substitution Drills

Drill 1:

Children listen and repeat the sentences spoken by the teacher.

Teacher: This is a yellow dress.

Students: This is a yellow dress.

Teacher: This is a blue dress.

Drill 2:

Students: This is a blue dress.

Teacher: This is a red dress.

Students: This is a red dress.

Teacher: This is a yellow dress.

Students: This is a yellow dress.

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Teacher: Blue.

Students: This is a blue dress.

Teacher: Red

Students: This is a red dress.

Teacher: Jacket

Students: This is a red jacket.

Etc. (Lines, 2005, pp. 52-53)

In this example, one word is substituted in each line of the drill. Drill one is appropriate for younger learners under the age of 8 years old. Drill (2) may work well with children who are over the age of eight as they can understand the concept of adjectives and can make the substitution easily.

Drills such as these can be boring. In order to make the drills more lively, the teacher is advised to personalize the content of the drill to his learners. For example, the teacher can base the drill on the different clothes that some learners are wearing. He can point to the dresses they are wearing and lead the drill. Drills can be used a number of times to introduce a new language pattern to children. Children then respond in unison in choral responses.

Choral Response

The choral response technique is also used when children are asked to repeat lines of a poem or song. "Sentences with

substitutions can be slipped right into the young-learner curriculum in the form of songs, chants, and finger-plays. When children are singing songs or finger-plays that have repetitive language and language substitutions, they are learning the patterns of the English language" (Linse, 2005, p. 53). Children repeat lines with one or two words substituted for other lines. While they sing the song, children are repeating the lines over and over again.

Dialogues

The dialogue is another feature of the audio-lingual method which can be used for young learners. Through using dialogues, learners can learn grammatically controlled structures that they can't use in their daily life. The teacher may teach dialogues through role-plays that are based on children's real-life conversations in their work and play.

Puppets

Dialogues for practice can be modeled through the use of puppets. "Teachers working with young learners are often aware that children feel more comfortable talking with the puppet than with an adult" (Slattery and Willis, 2003, referred to in Linse 2005, p. 54).

Linse (2005) believes that the use of puppets is very appropriate in the young-learner classroom. A child who developmentally is too shy to speak to an adult in front of his peers may feel very

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comfortable when the same adult is holding a puppet and speaking to the child as the puppet. Through using puppets, learning activities can be made more fun and interesting.

Communicative Language Teaching (CLT)

“During the 1970s and into the 1980s a focus on structured practice and de-contextualized tasks was the norm in materials produced to develop speaking skills” (Hughes,2011,p.85). At present, communicative language teaching (CLT) activities are designed to connect real-life situations with classroom instruction. In other words, “CLT is an approach and a philosophical orientation that connects classroom-based language learning with the language that learners need in order to communicate outside of the classroom” (Nunan, 2003 referred to in Linse, 2005, p. 56).

This is quite important as connecting classroom learning to real-life situation is one of the principles of communicative language learning. Children, for example, can be asked to use language in different situations, such as asking somebody for help, playing a game, inviting a friend and other similar situations.

Children often enjoy role playing. They consider it an authentic activity that represents the type of authentic play they engage in outside the classroom. Linse (2005) suggests that it is necessary to consider the type of language that children need in order to

communicate in specific situations. For instance, if children are going to role-play finding a pair of socks, they would need to know the interrogative *where*. They might also need to know prepositions such as *in, on, under*, etc. When children are playing board games, they will need to be able to say *first, next, last* as in spaces on the game and whose turn it is to play. If children are talking about a birthday party they had or went to, they will need to know the past tense.

The teacher should adjust his input to meet the language level of young learners in order to get the message across and help learners achieve a certain level of fluency. Therefore, the young language teacher should modify the task and teach the necessary language to make the input comprehensible.

Games

Playing games is a purposeful appropriate activity for young learners. Techniques of both the audio-lingual method and communicative language teaching make use of games. The teacher can set up games for children to repeat patterns of language and maximize English language use. Children, on the other hand, tend to monitor their use of English while they play the game. Thus games help children develop their speaking skills.

One of the favourite games is concentration, also known as memory. This is a game which can be played with partners or in

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small groups. Linse (2005) cites the following extract where two children are playing concentration. Notice how the language patterns can serve as the basis for substitutions.

S1: (Turns over a picture of a chocolate candy bar). *I like chocolate* (Turns over a picture of potatoes). *I don't like potatoes.*

S2: (Turns over a picture of potatoes). *I like potatoes.*

(Turns over a picture of apples) *I like apples.*

S1: (Turns over a picture of potatoes) *I don't like potatoes.*

(Turns over a picture potatoes) *I don't like potatoes.*(p.57)

Talking and Writing Box

The talking and writing box is made of pictures that children have self-selected and are interesting to them. When children are asked to talk about the pictures on their box, Linse (2005) believes, they talk about things that are of interest to them because they have selected the pictures for the box. Consider this extract taken from Linse (2005).

T. *Which item on your box makes you smile?*

S: *This picture.*

T: *Why?*

S. *It's my Uncle Donald. He is funny. On my birthday....*(p.58).

Teaching Pronunciation

“Rhymes, finger-plays, and chants help native English speaking children learn how to pronounce words correctly” (Linse, 2005, p.59). Certain rhymes and finger plays that focus on a specific phoneme or sound can be selected for practicing pronunciation. It is fortunate that English textbooks for young learners contain rhymes, poems and chants that can be used for this purpose.

A fun way to teach pronunciation to EFL learners is through the use of tongue twisters. Tongue twisters are words or phrases which are difficult to speak quickly or correctly; it is hard to repeat the same phoneme over and over again. Linse (2005) presents two of the most famous and popular tongue twisters:

Sally sells seashells at the seashore.

Peter Piper Picked a peck of pickled peppers.

If Peter Piper picked a peck of pickled peppers,
where's the peck of picked peppers that Peter
Piper picked (or) how many peppers did Peter Piper Pick? (p. 60)

Linse (2005) believes, “Children adore tongue twisters because they perceive saying the sounds as a game or challenge” (p. 60). For further use of tongue twisters you can see helpful websites such as (www.indianchild.com/tongue_twisters.htm).

Error Correction

Teachers spend some time correcting errors of young learners. It is not necessary to respond to all errors as this can discourage children from communicating and talking (Bailey, 2005; Linse, 2005).

Linse (2005) handles errors by modeling and providing children with the correct grammar or pronunciation. She encourages fluency and does not dampen the children's enthusiasm for communicating in English. The following extract taken from Linse (2005) shows how the teacher corrects errors:

T: What does she do at 6:00?

S1: She do her math homework at 6:00.

T: She does her math homework at 6:00. Yes, she does her math homework at 6:00. (Emphasizes the word *does*). Let's look at another picture. Tommy, what does he do at 7:00?

S2: He do karate.

T: He does karate. Yes, he does karate. (The teacher pulls out the dog puppet, Winston). Winston, can you help us with something?

W: (Teacher changes her voice to assume the role of Winston). Yes, I like to help.

T: (Points to the third picture.) Winston, what does he do at 6:00?

W: He does his English homework.

T: Good, Winston. All right everyone, what does he do at 6:00?

Ss: He does his English homework.

T: Very good. Again.

Ss: He does his English homework. (The teacher continues the same procedure with other items) (p.61).

This extract shows how the teacher models the correct response rather than pointing out the error. Then the teacher re-teaches the grammatical construction of the third person singular using the puppet. The error has been corrected and remodeled without embarrassing any of the learners. Children are then asked to respond. The teacher is very careful not to embarrass any of the children but rather just provide a model that the children can copy. (For details see Linse, 2005, pp. 54-62).

5. Activities and Approaches for Teaching and Learning in a Beginners' Course

Nation & Newton (2009, pp. 23-27) provide the following activities for teaching beginners:

Memorising Useful Phrases and Sentences

A quick way of gaining early fluency in a language is to memorise useful phrases. There are several advantages in doing this. First, simple communication can occur at an early stage. For example, learners should be able to say who they are, where they come from, and what they do from the very first language lessons. They should also be able to greet people with phrases like *good morning*, and *good day* and to thank them. Second, memorizing phrases and sentences allows learners to make accurate use of the language without having to know the grammar. Third, as we have seen, knowing sentences like *Please say that again*, *Please speak more slowly*, *What does X mean?* allows learners to take control of a conversation and use it for language learning purposes. Fourth, the words and patterns that make up such phrases can make the learning of later phrases and perhaps the learning of later patterns easier. Even at this very early stage of language learning, it is worth showing learners the value of making small cards with the second language word or phrase on one side and the first language translation on the other. These cards are used for recalling the meanings of the words and phrases, and later recalling the words and phrases. The learner carries a pack of these cards around and goes through them when they have a free moment. Research has shown that this spaced recall is a very effective way of learning (Nation,

2001, 296-316), and results in the kind of knowledge needed for normal language use.

There are several ways of deciding what sentences and phrases to learn. The following list is ranked in order of importance.

1. The learners think of things they want to be able to say and the teacher provides the second language phrase to say this.
2. The teacher thinks of the uses the learners need to make of the language and thinks of useful phrases to meet these needs. In some cases this may involve the teacher talking to the learners about their language needs and observing their daily use of the language.
3. The teacher consults lists of useful and frequent phrases that researchers have developed.
4. The teacher follows a course book.

The next step from memorising phrases and sentences is to learn some productive sentence patterns; that is, sentences where regular substitutions can be made to produce other sentences. These are called **substitution tables**. Here is an example.

1	2	3	4	5
I	'll	see	you	tomorrow.
		meet		on Friday.
		call		next week.
				at six o'clock.

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The sentence has five parts, but in the example substitutions are only made in two of them. When the pattern is first introduced, it is best to have substitution only in one part. The first step is to memorise one sentence, *I'll see you tomorrow*. Then the teacher gets the learners to take turns around the class making a systematic substitution in one part, for example *tomorrow*, *on Friday*, etc. The teacher should give the learner an oral cue before they make the substitution.

Teacher: I'll see you tomorrow. On Friday.

Learner 1: I'll see you on Friday.

Teacher: next week

Learner 2: I'll see you next week.

Teacher: at six o'clock

Learner 3: I'll see you at six o'clock.

When a new pattern or substitution table is introduced the teacher should start regularly. That is, the teacher should go through the table so that the learners can tell what the next sentence will be, and who will have to say it.

	eating ice-cream
	playing football
hate	going to the cinema
I like	studying geography
Love	walking in the evening
	reading comics

For example, when the teacher introduces this substitution table, it can start in a regular way with the teacher saying 'I hate eating ice-cream' and then pointing to *playing football*. The first learner in the first row says 'I hate playing football'. Then the teacher points to *going to the cinema* and the second learner in the first row says the new sentence and so on.

T: I hate eating ice-cream. (points to *playing football*)

L1: I hate playing football.

T: (points to *going to the cinema*)

L2: I hate going to the cinema.

When this is easy for the learners the teacher can point to phrases in any order. When this is easy for the learners, the teacher points to a phrase and then points to any learner with the other hand. Thus, the learners do not know what phrase will be next and who will be the next person to speak. So the teacher keeps the exercise

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interesting by increasing the amount of irregularity in the use of the table (George, 1965).

Another way to keep the exercise interesting is for the teacher to increase the speed of pointing at the table or at the learners. The learners thus have less time to think. The teacher should be careful that the learners do not say the sentences too quickly because of this.

Another way to keep the exercise interesting is to make the learners use their memory. If the table is written on the board, the teacher can gradually rub out words and phrases. The teacher still points to the white board but often points to an empty space and the learners must remember what was there in order to say the sentence. To make it easier, when the words are rubbed out, they can be replaced by drawings or words in the first language. Or, after the learners have used a substitution table for a short time, it is rubbed off the whiteboard or the learners close their books. Then the teacher says parts of phrases and the learners must say the whole sentence. So, using the above substitution table the teacher would say, 'I hate eating ice-cream playing.' The learners must remember that *playing* was followed by *football* in the table and so the learner says, 'I hate playing football.' Then the teacher says 'comics' and so on.

There is a danger in the use of substitution tables. The items which are listed in one column, *on Friday, next week, at six o'clock*, tend to be related in meaning and so can interfere with each other.

Thus learners may later incorrectly recall items like *on next week*, *at Friday*. The teacher should plan substitutions with this possibility in mind (for example, don't include *on Friday*), and should look to see if interference is occurring.

So far we have looked at a range of language-focused activities to use in the beginning stages of a language course involving memorising phrases and sentences, and practising sentence patterns. These are all useful shortcuts to getting started in a language, but do not directly develop the implicit knowledge needed for normal language use. The following activities move closer to meaning-focused input and meaning-focused output where the focus is on communicating messages.

Guided Listening and Speaking

The prototypical technique for guided listening and speaking is the **What is it?** technique (Nation, 1978).

The teacher writes some sentences on the blackboard. The sentences describe something or someone. Here is an example:

It is thin.

It is black.

It has many teeth.

It is made of plastic.

We can find it near a mirror.

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It costs a dollar.

Everybody uses it.

It is used for combing your hair.

What is it?

The teacher shows the learners how to change the sentences to talk about different things. While she does this the teacher follows the plan very closely. For example, *a needle* :

It is thin.

It is silver.

It has a sharp point.

It is made of steel.

We can find it in our house.

It costs ten cents.

You need good eyes to use it.

It is used for sewing things.

What is it?

Then the teacher gives the learners the name of something, for example, *a pen* and they must describe it using the plan. She gives a few new words if they are needed in the description. Each learner can be given a different item written on a card to describe. When the learners know how to follow the plan, it can be played as a game.

One learner describes something while the others try to guess what it is. As they improve, the learners can add some sentences that are not in the plan and make other changes. The exercise can be made more controlled by asking the learners to follow the sentence patterns of the plan very carefully.

This technique has the following features:

1. Learners can be prepared for the activity by learning and practising a small number of sentence patterns.
2. Communication is important because the activity has an outcome that depends on successful communication.
3. The learners can do the activity with each other in a form of pair and group work. In this way the activity provides opportunities for both listening and speaking to occur.
4. Learners can make changes to the activity so that the outcome is not completely predictable.

6. Speaking Activities with Younger Learners

Teachers of young children construct utterances with their children. Teachers build on children's utterances and help them produce the language. Thus, children do not have to be able to produce complete sentences or questions from the start. "After children have been exposed to English through listening, they soon want and are able to participate in interactions with the teacher and

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each other”(Pinter, 2006, p. 56). The teacher may ask children to start copying simple phrases, join in with rhymes and songs, answer simple questions, introduce themselves, and memorise short dialogues.

Pinter states, “The first building blocks that allow children to move from listening to speaking and to begin to participate in interactions with others are so-called ‘unanalysed chunks’ ”(p. 56). By this Pinter illustrates that children make use of phrases previously heard input to use them without conscious analysis. The teacher’s input usually contains short chunks such as ‘see you tomorrow’ which learners pick up as an unanalyzed chunk. They may understand it as ‘goodbye’ because the teacher says it at the end of the lesson, but they may not be able to know what each word means in isolation. Similar chunks can be learnt from other texts such as songs, rhymes, chants, stories and dialogues.

Speakers of English use fixed chunks such as ‘see you later’ ‘what a surprise’, or ‘what do you think’ which are complete and can be used as they are. In addition, speakers use partially fixed chunks such as ‘have you got’ which require completion. These sorts of chunks help learners produce language faster as they do not have to think of individual words. Children use more chunks than adults do because they do not share adult’s tendency to analyse language into

constituent parts. Teachers can teach set phrases as chunks as in the following example:

A: What do you like?

B: I like Pizza.

A: What do you like?

B: I like chicken. (Pinter, 2006, p.57).

The chunks 'What do you like' in the above mini-dialogue is a fixed chunk, whereas 'I like' is a partially fixed one which children are asked to complete by substituting certain items in the original dialogue with items that are relevant to their personal life. These dialogues are controlled drill-like practice, which should be made meaningful and fun. Pinter (2006) illustrates:

Guessing games, though fun, are usually drill-like. For example, one child comes to the front of the classroom and mimes an animal. The rest of the class ask questions, 'Are you a monkey? Are you a giraffe?' All their questions follow the same pattern. However, the purpose of the activity is meaningful to them. It is a guessing game and whoever guesses the right answer gets to come out and mime another animal (p. 57).

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Language games which involve repetitive work are enjoyed by children. In these activities, children copy an original text and use it as a model to create their own. Pinter, (2005) gives the following example:

I like football and swimming. I also like drawing and volleyball. I don't like skiing or tennis. Hoot likes computer games and music. He also likes cycling and basketball. He doesn't like skating or dancing (p. 57).

After listening to reading a 'model' which shows them how to construct the sentences, children try to create their own description of what they and their friends like doing.

The drill is meaningful in the sense that children choose the words they would like to substitute in the model patterns. Children could develop this activity to ask each other what they like and what they don't like doing and find out the popular activity in their class.

Speaking in the Classroom

Children's coursebooks often help children practise language patterns and conversations. Many of the exercises such as those in BFS are designed for children to do in pairs with a partner:

S1: What time is it?

S2: It's seven o'clock. It's time to get up.

S2: What time is it?

S1: It's seven-fifteen. It's time to get dressed (Linse,2005,p.64).

As children become familiar with the pattern, they can personalize the content to talk about their own lives. Wall pictures can be used to practise a specific aspect of grammar, such as the continuous tense by asking the question, 'What's happening?'

7. Speaking Activities with Older Learners

Like younger learners, older learners can also be asked to use simple dialogues and drills. They can extend these dialogues to interviews or role-play which may require spontaneous and creative language use. However, such tasks require some preparations. Learners need, first of all, to learn certain phrases to check their understanding (e.g. Sorry, I did not understand. What did you say?) To manage games and tasks, learners need to be equipped with useful classroom language such as, 'it is your turn', 'which one is mine?', 'What have you got?' It is useful to display classroom language on posters. "Some of the tasks might require that the learners pay attention to what their partner is saying, ask for and give

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clarification, repair a communication breakdown, or express-themselves explicitly with extra care” (Pinter, 2006, p. 58-59).

Negotiation of Meaning

Learners need to negotiate meaning during games and interactive tasks to make sure that they understand each other. Unlike younger learners, older learners can successfully repair conversations as this ability grows gradually with age. Oliver’s study (1998 cited in Pinter, 2006) showed that older children negotiated meaning. They ‘used more clarification checks, confirmation checks, and repetition but not comprehension checks’ (p. 59). Oliver attributed her findings to children’s developmental level. “The implication of this study for teachers is that tasks that require meaning negotiation may have to be introduced slowly and carefully, making sure that children are ready and capable of dealing with the demands of the tasks” (Pinter, 2006, p. 60).

Complex Tasks

One of the most effective and demanding tasks is the information gap tasks, where speakers A and B, for example, have different information. Speakers exchange information and describe, say, details of pictures to each other. Children are supposed to use language creatively on the spot. Speaker ‘A’ initiates questions and responds to his partner’s questions and pays attention to what he is

saying. Speakers “check understanding, clarify meaning, and monitor the progression of the task carefully” (Pinter, 2006, p. 60).

It is important for teachers to select tasks that are motivating but not too difficult. In addition, a positive learning environment where children feel happy and secure can enhance children’s contribution to the lesson and motivate them to talk. “It is also crucial that children understand that they can speak up even when they are not sure about their contributions or have a fragmented answer or idea. This principle has important implications for careful error correction and plenty of encouragement” (Pinter, 2006, p. 60). It is helpful to build in children the confidence to speak up.

Purposeful and motivating activities which create a communicative need are also needed. It is a good idea to encourage children to use English at home with parents and other people. Children and parents can listen to songs, practise dialogues and hold discussion sessions afterwards in English.

8. Managing Speaking Activities

To control your class you need to have well planned lessons which contain activities that keep children interested in doing their tasks.

Managing the Noise Level

Children can disturb other classes during a speaking activity. However, it should be noted that "children should be given numerous opportunities to speak in class even though children can get loud, literally in a matter of seconds" (Linse, 2005, p. 62). The teacher can use a number of signals to teach children how to become quiet rather than contributing to the noise by shouting at children to stop, which might be counter-productive. Thus developing a visual cue to get children to be quiet and listen to instruction can be more productive. The teacher, for example, can raise one or both of his hands as a sign for children to stop talking. He can ask children to raise up their own hands and wait for the teacher to give them further instructions.

9. Summary

In this chapter, some of the issues related to children's ways of speaking and their development were discussed. Techniques and activities for teaching speaking skills for children were presented. Finally, some of the techniques and strategies for managing and dealing with speaking tasks were also provided.



Phonemic Awareness and Phonics Instruction

1. Introduction

This chapter begins with pointing out children's needs to perceive how the sounds in words work in order to improve their reading comprehension. It also shows how children can develop phonemic awareness in several ways through a number of activities. Research findings on phonemic awareness instruction is then presented, and some common phonemic terms are illustrated.

The chapter also deals with ways for phonics instructions and investigates the relationships between the letters and the individual sounds; the goal is to help children learn and use the alphabets and to understand the relationships between the written letters and spoken sounds. In addition, the chapter presents findings of research on phonics instructions.

2. Phonemic Awareness Instruction

Phonemic awareness is the ability to notice, think about, and work with the individual sounds in spoken words. Before children

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learn to read print, they need to become aware of how the sounds in words work. They must understand that words are made up of speech sounds, or phonemes.

Phonemes are the smallest parts of sound in a spoken word that make a difference in the word's meaning. For example, changing the first phoneme in the word **hat** from /h/ to /p/ changes the word from **hat** to **pat**, and so changes the meaning. (A letter between slash marks shows the phoneme, or sound, that the letter represents, and not the name of the letter. For example, the letter **h** represents the sound /h/).

Children can show us that they have phonemic awareness in several ways, including:

- recognizing which words in a set of words begin with the same sound ("**Bell**, **bike**, and **boy** all have /b/ at the beginning.");
- isolating and saying the first or last sound in a word ("The beginning sound of **dog** is /d/"). "the ending sound of **sit** is /t/");
- combining, or blending the separate sounds in a word to say the word ("/m/, /a/, /p/ – **map**");
- breaking, or segmenting a word into its separate sounds ("**Up** – /u/, /p/").

Children who have phonemic awareness skills are likely to have an easier time learning to read and spell than children who have few or none of these skills.

Although phonemic awareness is a widely used term in reading, it is often misunderstood. One misunderstanding is that phonemic awareness and phonics are the same thing. Phonemic awareness is *not* phonics. Phonemic awareness is the understanding that the sounds of *spoken* language work together to make words. Phonics is the understanding that there is a predictable relationship between phonemes and graphemes, the letters that represent those sounds in *written* language. If children are to benefit from phonics instruction, they need phonemic awareness.

The reason is obvious: children who cannot hear and work with the phonemes of spoken words will have a difficult time learning how to relate these phonemes to the graphemes when they see them in written words.

Another misunderstanding about phonemic awareness is that it means the same as phonological awareness. The two names are *not* interchangeable. Phonemic awareness is a subcategory of phonological awareness. The focus of phonemic awareness is narrow – identifying and manipulating the individual sounds in words. The focus of phonological awareness is much broader. It includes identifying and manipulating larger parts of spoken language, such as words, syllables, and onsets and rimes – as well as phonemes. It also encompasses awareness of other aspects of sound, such as rhyming, alliteration, and intonation.

Children can show us that they have phonological awareness in several ways, including:

- identifying and making oral rhymes;
"The pig has a (wig)."
"Pat the (cat)."
"The sun is (fun)."
- identifying and working with syllables in spoken words;
"I can clap the parts in my name: An-drew."
- identifying and working with onsets and rimes in spoken syllables or one-syllable words;
"The first part of sip is s-."
"The last part of win is-in."
- identifying and working with individual phonemes in spoken words:
"The first sound in sun is /s/."

Phonological Awareness

Phonemic awareness is only one type of phonological awareness.

Broader phonological awareness

- *Identifying and making oral rhymes*
- *Identifying and working with syllables in spoken words.*

Narrower phonological awareness

- *Identifying and working with onsets and rimes in spoken syllables.*
- *Identifying and working with individual phonemes in words spoken (phonemic awareness).*

The Language of Literacy

Here are some definitions of terms used frequently in reading instruction.

Phoneme

*A **phoneme** is the smallest part of **spoken** language that makes a difference in the meaning of words. English has about 41 phonemes. A few words, such as **a** or **oh**, have only one phoneme. Most words, however, have more than one phoneme: The word **if** has two phonemes (/i/ /f/); **check** has three phonemes (/ch/ /e/ /k/), and **stop** has four phonemes (/s/ /t/ /o/ /p/). Sometimes one phoneme is represented by more than one letter.*

Grapheme

*A **grapheme** is the smallest part of **written** language that represents a phoneme in the spelling of a word. A grapheme may be just one letter, such as **b, d, f, p, s**; or several letters, such as **ch, sh, th, -ck, eu, -igh**.*

Phonemic Awareness and Phonics Instruction

Phonics

Phonics is the understanding that there is a predictable relationship between phonemes (the sounds of spoken language) and graphemes (the letters and spellings that represent those sounds in written language).

Phonemic Awareness

Phonemic awareness is the ability to hear, identify, and manipulate the individual sounds – phonemes – in spoken words.

Phonological Awareness

Phonological awareness is a broad term that includes phonemic awareness. In addition to phonemes, phonological awareness activities can involve work with rhymes, words, syllables, and onsets and rimes.

Syllable

A syllable is a word part that contains a vowel or, in spoken language, a vowel sound (e-vent; news-pa-per; ver-y).

Onset and Rime

Onsets and rimes are parts of spoken language that are smaller than syllables but larger than phonemes. An onset is the initial consonant(s) sound of a syllable (the onset of bag is b-; of swim, sw-).

A rime is the part of a syllable that contains the vowel and all that follows it (the rime of bag is -ag; of swim, -im).

3. What does scientifically based research tell us about phonemic awareness instruction?

Key findings from the scientific research on phonemic awareness instruction provide the following conclusions of particular interest and value to classroom teachers:

Phonemic awareness can be taught and learned.

Effective phonemic awareness instruction teaches children to notice, think about, and work with (manipulate) sounds in spoken language. Teachers use many activities to build phonemic awareness, including:

• **Phoneme isolation**

Children recognize individual sounds in a word.

Teacher: "What is the first sound in *van*? "

Children: "The first sound in *van* is /v/."

• **Phoneme identity**

Children recognize the same sounds in different words.

Teacher: "What sound is the same in *fix*, *fall*, and *fun*? "

Children: "The first sound, /f/, is the same."

• **Phoneme categorization**

Children recognize the word in a set of three or four words that has the 'odd' sound.

Teacher: " Which word doesn't belong? *Bus, bun, rug.* "

Children: " *Rug* does not belong. It doesn't begin with /b/."

• **Phoneme blending**

Children listen to a sequence of separately spoken phonemes, and then combine the phonemes to form a word. Then they write and read the word.

Teacher: "What word is /b/ /i/ /g/?"

Children: "/b/ /i/ /g/ is *big.* "

Teacher: "Now let's write the sounds in *big*: /b/, write *b*; /i/, write *i*; /g/, write *g.* "

Teacher: (Writes *big* on the board.) 'Now we're going to read the word *big.*'

• **Phoneme segmentation**

Children break a word into its separate sounds, saying each sound as they tap out or count it. Then they write and read the word.

Teacher: "How many sounds are in *grab*? "

Children: "/g/ /r/ /a/ /b/. Four sounds. "

Teacher: "Now let's write the sounds in *grab*: /g/, write *g*; /r/, write *r*, /a/, write *a*; /b/, write *b.* "

Teacher: (Writes *grab* on the board.) "Now we're going to read the word *grab*."

• **Phoneme deletion**

Children recognize the word that remains when a phoneme is removed from another word.

Teacher: "What is *smile* without the /s/?"

Children: "*Smile* without the /s/ is *mile*."

• **Phoneme addition**

Children make a new word by adding a phoneme to an existing word.

Teacher: "What word do you have if you add /s/ to the beginning of *park*."

Children: "*Spark*."

• **Phoneme substitution**

Children substitute one phoneme for another to make a new word.

Teacher: "The word is *bug*. Change /g/ to /n/. What's the new word?"

Children: "*Bun*."

Phonemic awareness instruction helps children learn to read.

Phonemic Awareness and Phonics Instruction

Phonemic awareness instruction improves children's ability to read words. It also improves their reading comprehension. Phonemic awareness instruction aids reading comprehension primarily through its influence on word reading. For children to understand what they read, they must be able to read words rapidly and accurately. Rapid and accurate word reading frees children to focus their attention on the meaning of what they read. Of course, many other things, including the size of children's vocabulary and their world experiences, contribute to reading comprehension.

Phonemic awareness instruction helps children learn to spell.

Teaching phonemic awareness—particularly how to segment words into phonemes—helps children learn to spell. The explanation for this may be that children who have phonemic awareness understand that sounds and letters are related in a predictable way. Thus, they are able to relate the sounds to letters as they spell words.

Phonemic awareness instruction is most effective when children are taught to manipulate phonemes by using the letters of the alphabet.

Phonemic awareness instruction makes a stronger contribution to the improvement of reading and spelling when children are taught to use letters as they manipulate phonemes than when instruction is limited to phonemes alone. Teaching sounds along with the letters of

the alphabet is important because it helps children to see how phonemic awareness relates to their reading and writing. Learning to blend phonemes with letters helps children read words. Learning to segment sounds with letters helps them spell words.

If children do not know letter names and shapes, they need to be taught them along with phonemic awareness. Relating sounds to letters is, of course, the heart of phonics instruction.

Some Common Phonemic Awareness Terms

Phoneme manipulation

When children work with phonemes in words, they are manipulating the phonemes. Types of phoneme manipulation include blending phonemes to make words, segmenting words into phonemes, deleting phonemes from words, adding phonemes to words, or substituting one phoneme for another to make a new word.

Blending

When children combine individual phonemes to form words, they are blending the phonemes. They also are blending when they combine onsets and rimes to make syllables and combine syllables to make words.

Segmenting (segmentation)

When children break words into their individual phonemes, they are segmenting the words. They are also segmenting when they break words into syllables and syllables into onsets and rimes.

4. Questions you may have about phonemic awareness instruction

Which methods of phonemic awareness instruction will have the greatest impact on my students' learning to read?

You can use a variety of teaching methods that contribute to children's success in learning to read. However, teaching one or two types of phoneme manipulation -- specifically blending and segmenting phonemes in words -- is likely to produce greater benefits to your students' reading than teaching several types of manipulation.

Teaching your students to manipulate phonemes along with letters can also contribute to their reading success.

Your instruction should also be explicit about the connection between phonemic awareness and reading. For example:

Teacher: "Listen: I'm going to say the sounds in the word *jam* –
/j/ /a/ /m/. What is the word? "

Children: "Jam."

Teacher: "You say the sounds in the word *jam*."

Children: "/j/ /a/ /m/."

Teacher: "Now let's write the sounds in *jam*: /j/, write **j**; /a/, write **a**; /m/ write **m**."

Teacher: (Writes *jam* on the board.) "Now we're going to read the word *jam*."

Which of my students will benefit from phonemic awareness instruction?

Phonemic awareness instruction can help essentially all of your students learn to read, including preschoolers, kindergartners, first graders who are just starting to read, and older, less able readers.

Phonemic awareness instruction can help most of your students learn to spell. Instruction can be effective with preschoolers, kindergartners, and first graders. It can help children from all economic levels.

How much times should I spend on phonemic awareness instruction?

You do not need to devote a lot of class time to phonemic awareness instruction. Over the school year, your entire phonemic awareness programme should take no more than 20 hours.

Your students will differ in their phonemic awareness. Some will need more instruction than others. The best approach is to assess

students' phonemic awareness before you begin instruction. Assessment will let you know which students do and do not need the instruction, which students should be taught the easier types of phoneme manipulation (such as identifying initial sounds in words), and which should receive instruction in more advanced types (such as segmenting, blending, deletion/ addition, and substitution). (Armbruster et al., 2001, pp. 1-8.)

5. Phonics Instruction

Phonics instruction teaches children the relationships between the letters (graphemes) of written language and the individual sounds (phonemes) of spoken language. It teaches children to use these relationships to read and write words. Teachers of reading and publishers of programs of beginning reading instruction sometimes use different labels to describe these relationships, including the following:

- *graphophonemic relationships*
- *letter-sound associations*
- *letter-sound correspondences*
- *sound-symbol correspondences*
- *sound-spellings*

Regardless of the label, the goal of phonics instruction is to help children learn and use the alphabetic principle – the understanding that there are systematic and predictable relationships between

written letters and spoken sounds. Knowing these relationships will help children recognize familiar words accurately and automatically, and "decode" new words. In short, knowledge of the alphabetic principle contributes greatly to children's ability to read words both in isolation and in connected text.

Critics of phonics instruction argue that English spellings are too irregular for phonics instruction to really help children learn to read words. The point is, however, that phonics instruction teaches children a system for remembering how to read words. Once children learn, for example, that *phone* is spelled this way rather than *foan*, their memory helps them to read, spell, and recognize the word instantly and more accurately than they could read *foan*. The same process is true for all irregularly spelled words. Most of these words contain some regular letter-sound relationships that can help children remember how to read them.

In summary, the alphabetic system is a mnemonic device that supports our memory for specific words.

6. What does scientifically based research tell us about phonics instruction?

Key findings from the scientific research on phonics instruction include the following conclusions of particular interest and value to classroom teachers.

Systematic and explicit phonics instruction is more effective than non-systematic or no phonics instruction.

Systematic and explicit phonics instruction makes a bigger contribution to children's growth in reading than instruction that provides non-systematic or no phonics instruction.

How do systematic programs of phonics instruction differ from non-systematic programs? The hallmark of programs of systematic phonics instruction is the direct teaching of a set of letter-sound relationships in a clearly defined sequence. The set includes the major sound/spelling relationships of both consonants and vowels.

The programs also provide materials that give children substantial practice in applying knowledge of these relationships as they read and write. These materials include books or stories that contain a large number of words that children can decode by using the letter-sound relationships they have learned and are learning. The programs also might provide children with opportunities to spell words and to write their own stories with the letter-sound relationships they are learning.

Approaches to Phonics Instruction

Most teachers are acquainted with several approaches to phonics instruction, including those listed below. The distinctions

Phonemic Awareness and Phonics Instruction

between approaches is not absolute, and some programs of instruction combine approaches.

Synthetic phonics *Children learn how to convert letters or letter combinations into sounds, and then how to blend the sounds together to form recognizable words.*

Analytic phonics *Children learn to analyze letter-sound relationships in previously learned words. They do not pronounce sounds in isolation.*

Analogy-based phonics *Children learn to use parts of word families they know to identify words they don't know that have similar parts.*

Phonics through spelling *Children learn to segment words into phonemes and to make words by writing letters for phonemes.*

Embedded phonics *Children are taught letter-sound relationships during the reading of connected text. (Since children encounter different letter-sound relationships as they read, this approach is not systematic or explicit.)*

Onset-rime phonics instruction *Children learn to identify the sound of the letter or letters before the first vowel (the onset) in a one-syllable word and the sound of the remaining part of the word (the rime).*

Phonemic Awareness and Phonics Instruction

Systematic and explicit phonics instruction significantly improves kindergarten and first-grade children's word recognition and spelling.

Systematic phonics instruction produces the greatest impact on children's reading achievement when it begins in kindergarten or first grade.

Both kindergarten and first-grade children who receive systematic phonics instruction are better at reading and spelling words than kindergarten and first-grade children who do not receive systematic instruction.

Systematic and explicit phonics instruction significantly improves children's reading comprehension.

Systematic phonics instruction results in better growth in children's ability to comprehend what they read than non-systematic or no phonics instruction. This is not surprising because the ability to read the words in a text accurately and quickly is highly related to successful reading comprehension.

Systematic and explicit phonics instruction is most effective when introduced early.

Phonics instruction is most effective when it begins in kindergarten or first grade. To be effective with young learners, systematic instruction must be designed appropriately and taught

carefully. It should include teaching letter shapes and names, phonemic awareness, and all major letter-sound relationships. It should ensure that all children learn these skills. As instruction proceeds, children should be taught to use this knowledge to read and write words.

7. Questions you may have about phonics instruction

Is phonics instruction more effective when students are taught individually, in small groups, or in whole classes?

You can teach phonics effectively to the whole class, to small groups, or to individual students. The needs of the students in your class and the number of adults working with them determine how you deliver instruction.

Doesn't phonics instruction get in the way of reading comprehension?

Quite the opposite is true. Because systematic phonics instruction helps children learn to identify words, it increases their ability to comprehend what they read. Reading words accurately and automatically enables children to focus on the meaning of text. The research is quite convincing in showing that phonics instruction contributes to comprehension skills rather than inhibiting them.

Does phonics instruction slow down the progress of some children?

Again, the opposite is true. Phonics instruction contributes to growth in the reading of most children. It is important, however, to acknowledge that children vary greatly in the knowledge of reading that they bring to school. For phonics instruction to support the reading progress of all of your students, it is important to work in flexible instructional groups and to pace instruction to maximize student progress.

How does systematic and explicit phonics instruction affect spelling?

Systematic programs of phonics instruction produce more growth in spelling among kindergarten and first-grade students than non-systematic or no phonics programs. However, systematic phonics instruction for normally developing and poor readers above first grade does not produce gains in spelling. The reason may be that as students move up in the grades, spelling is less a matter of applying letter-sound relationships and more a matter of combining word parts.

How long should phonics be taught?

Approximately two years of phonics instruction is sufficient for most students. If phonics instruction begins early in kindergarten, it should be completed by the end of first grade. If phonics instruction begins early in first grade, it should be completed by the end of second grade (Armbruster et al., 2001, pp. 11-17.)

8. Summary

To sum up, this chapter has illustrated what is meant by phonemic awareness and phonics instruction.

Phonemic awareness is the ability to hear, identify, and manipulate individual sounds –phonemes – in spoken words. Phonemic awareness is important because it improves children's word reading and reading comprehension, and helps children learn to spell. Phonemic awareness can be developed through a number of activities, including asking children to identify phonemes, categorize phonemes, blend phonemes to form words, segment words into phonemes, delete or add phonemes to form new words, and substitute phonemes to make new words. Phonemic instruction is most effective when children are taught to manipulate phonemes by using the letters of the alphabet, and when instruction focuses on only one or two rather than several types of phoneme manipulation.

Phonemic Awareness and Phonics Instruction

Phonics instruction helps children learn the relationships between the letters of written language and the sounds of spoken language. Phonics instruction is important because it leads to an understanding of the alphabetic principle — the systematic and predictable relationships between written letters and spoken sounds.

Effective phonics programs provide ample opportunities for children to apply what they are learning about letters and sounds to the reading of words, sentences, and stories.

Systematic and explicit phonics instruction

- significantly improves children's word recognition, spelling, and reading comprehension.
- is most effective when it begins in kindergarten or first grade.

Note: The content of this chapter is taken literally from Armbruster et al. (2001, pp. 1-8, 11-17).



Teaching Reading Skills to Young Learners

1. Introduction

In the curriculum for teaching English to young learners, much emphasis is placed on listening and speaking. However, reading and writing can be gradually introduced to meet the demands of learning to read and write in English. This chapter illustrates why reading skills should be introduced to young learners, and how their reading is influenced by their pre-school years experience in recognising words and signs. The chapter discusses what reading skills involve and presents some sort of background knowledge about reading at different stages of development in language learning. Classroom techniques and activities are then presented, and specific activities for teaching reading to younger and older children are suggested.

2. Why Reading?

Introducing reading skills for young learners of English depends on many factors such as the age of the children, their level of English

their first language background, and their ability to read. Thus, “there is no formula for teaching reading in English as a second or foreign language because second language contexts can be varied and complex. In foreign language contexts, the general consensus is that children should learn to read in their mother tongue first and when they are reasonably competent they can learn to read in a foreign language” (Pinter, 2006, p. 65). This means that reading and writing skills in a foreign language should not be introduced unless children become literate in their first language.

Pinter (2006) interprets, “The most convincing reason for teaching reading and writing in English is that many children show both interest and enthusiasm in doing so when they start English”(p. 66). Children feel with a sense of achievement when they become able to read and write something meaningful in the foreign language such as a short message, or a party invitation. In addition, learners like to see the words and phrases they have learnt orally written down. Children’s reading and writing can be considered as a record keeping for using their English through written homework or through using the Internet.

It is useful to explore how children learn to read in their first language before talking about EFL reading and writing for young learners. In order to be familiar with the process of reading in the

foreign language, an understanding of the same process in the first language is pre-requisite.

3. Early Reading

Reading and Writing in the Pre-School Years

Children's experience with reading in their first language brings some strategies to the process of learning to read in the target language. They have some knowledge about the reading process. In other words, they bring the strategies of how they learnt to learn in their mother tongue which can influence their reading in the foreign language. "They are likely to use strategies that worked in their first language reading, such as spelling, trying to sound things out, comparing sounds and letters" (Pinter, 2006, p. 68).

Children learn about literacy from their environment during their early years. They begin to recognize words and signs written at supermarkets or elsewhere. They begin to recognize shapes of letters and words in story books read to them by their parents. Children also observe their parents reading books or newspapers, working on computers or filling in forms and writing cards, etc. These sorts of experiences will prepare children for reading and writing.

Children begin to understand the reasons and purposes for reading, such as enjoyment or finding out a certain piece of information such as the time when a cartoon starts. They learn to

Teaching Reading skills to Young Learners

write their names and their parents' names. This makes them understand that messages can be represented on a page using symbols. By the time children go to school they already have practised and decoded symbols for reading and writing.

Reading and Writing at School

Children possess a great resource of oral competence of words and phrases in their first language. This oral language proficiency enhances children's ability to learn to read because it enables them to make intelligent guesses by drawing on what would make sense. Pinter (2006) illustrates this ability with the following example: "Let us imagine that an English native speaker child is reading the beginning of a story and can work out that the first word is 'once'. Then without having to read the next word, he can make a reasonable guess that the next phrase is 'upon a time'. This happens because the child knows this phrase is frequently used at the beginning of stories"(p. 67). Thus meaningful contexts enable children to make good predictions about the meaning of a certain word or phrase.

Pinter goes further to say that in order to teach aspects of the English system that are regular, English primary schools teach letter-sound correspondence patterns (phonics) to all children. Songs and rhymes are great for teaching phonics because they contain rhyming words such as 'One two three four five, once I caught a fish alive'

where 'five' and 'alive' both rhyme and follow the same written pattern.

With this approach learners are encouraged to recognize analogies below word level to help them to work out how to read and write words. They are taught to notice that each word has an onset (first consonant or consonants) and a rime (the rest of the word) and it is useful to group words that have a different onset but the same rime because they are pronounced the same way. For example, consider: 'c(at), b(at), m(at), s(at), p(at), h(at), fl(at)'. The initial consonant is salient but the rime of all of these is the same.

Recognizing patterns like this will be useful in reading. Traditional nursery rhymes are full of such rhyming pairs, so children find it quite easy to get a feel for rhymes. For example, consider 'the cow jumped over the m(oon)' and 'the dish ran away with the sp(oon)'. Or 'Humpty Dumpty sat on a w(all)' and 'Humpty Dumpty had a great f(all)'. Or 'Jack and J(ill) went up the h(ill)'. Many native English children know these rhymes by heart so it is easy for them to notice the patterns in a meaningful context (Pinter, 2006, pp. 67-78).

The whole word method is another strategy to teach irregular words. This method encourages the rote learning of some 'sight vocabulary' that children can immediately recognize. Children remember words as visual images in this method. Recognizing a

large number of vocabulary can help children process other unfamiliar words.

4. Background to the Teaching of Reading

Reading skills involve making sense of and deriving meaning from words. Readers must be able to decode the printed words in order to comprehend what they read. "For second-language learners there are three different elements which impact reading: the child's background knowledge, the child's linguistic knowledge of the target language, and the strategies or techniques the child uses to tackle the text" (Peregoy and Boyle, 2004, referred to in Linse, 2005, p. 69). Children need, for example, to understand what the written symbols represent in order to learn how to decode letters. Children need to recognise the symbols that form words. In other words, children need to decode or decipher individual words.

Generally speaking, the phonetic alphabet is used to represent a specific sound or phoneme. "English has approximately 40 sounds but uses only 26 symbols" (Moats, 2001, referred to in Linse, 2005, p. 70). Thus, there is no one-to-one sound-letter correspondence in English; this is perhaps why children get confused when they try to decode English words. "For example, think of words such as 'enough' and 'thought' or 'height' and 'weight'. The written

similarities between these pairs of words do not lead to similar pronunciation”(Pinter, 2006, p. 67)

Linse (2005) cites an example of the letter *c* which is used to decode both a hard and soft sound in English. The hard *c* sound, /k/, found in *cat* and *carpet* is more common than the soft *c* sound, /s/, found in *cereal*. Due to this lack of correspondence between the letter and sound, children find it hard to decode English words (Linse, 2005, p. 70).

5. Approaches to Reading

Scott and Ytreberg (2001, pp.49-51) present a number of different ways to approach the introduction of reading in a foreign language.

1. Phonics

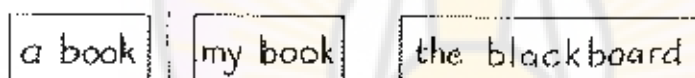
This approach is based on letters and sounds. Basically, we teach the pupils the letters of the alphabet, and the combination of letters, phonically – as they are actually pronounced – so that the letter *a* is pronounced /æ/ the letter *b* is pronounced /b/, *c* is pronounced /k/ *ph* is pronounced /f/ and so on. It is best to start off with three or four letters that can make up a number of words, like *c a n t*. You can then show pupils how to pronounce /kæn/, /kænt/, /kænt/ and /tæn/.

Although phonics can become very complicated as all the pronunciation rules are introduced, it can be a very useful way into

reading for those learners who are not familiar with the Roman alphabet or who do not have a one to one relationship between letters and sounds in their own written language. It is not to be recommended as the main way into reading for those pupils who are already reading in their own language using the Roman alphabet, and it should not be taught to pupils who are learning to read using phonics in their own language – this could lead to great confusion in pronunciation.

2. Look and Say

This approach is based on words and phrases, and makes a lot of use of flashcards – words written on cards like this:



It is usual to start by teaching everyday words which are already familiar to the children. The teacher shows the children the word and says it while pointing to the object. The children repeat the word. This happens several times with each word. The introduction of the words only takes a short time, and goes quite quickly, so the teacher may spend five minutes of a thirty minute lesson on four new words. There are a lot of word recognition games which can be done at this stage – matching words and pictures, pointing to the object on the card, guessing which card Teddy has picked out of the hat – and so

this approach encourages recognition of a range of words and phrases before 'reading' a text.

3. Whole Sentence Reading

Here the teacher teaches recognition of whole phrases and sentences which have meaning in themselves. This often means a story which the children read for the first time themselves after the whole text is familiar to them. The words are not presented in isolation, but as whole phrases or sentences. Since we think that reading for meaning should be encouraged as soon as possible, we will look at this approach in more detail below.

4. Language Experience Approach

This approach to reading is based on the child's spoken language; it is a good, pupil-centred approach to reading. The teacher writes down a sentence for the child to read which is based on what the child has said. For example:

This is me.

My sister is nine. She is in class 3F.

This is a postcard from my uncle in Milan.

Which Method to Choose?

Clearly, if there was one correct method for teaching all children to read, then only one method would exist. Scott and Yetreberg, (2001, p.51) favour an approach which concentrates on meaning from the beginning. However, if your pupils have a mother tongue which is not based on the Roman script, you will probably find that you will have to spend quite some time teaching phonics and word recognition first.

No matter which approach to reading you take as your basic approach, you should remember that all these approaches are a way in to reading and are not an end in themselves. You will probably want to make use of all the methods described at some stage in the process of learning to read.

6. Five to Seven Year Olds

- Five to seven year olds are likely to take longer to learn to read in a foreign language than eight to ten year olds. (for details see Scott and Yetreberg, 2001, pp.51-53). Some children starting school are not familiar with books or what they are used for. They have to go through the process of doing reading-like activities first – ‘reading’ from left to right, turning the pages at the right place, going back and reading the same pages again, etc. Picture books with and without text are invaluable at this stage.

- If your pupils have not learnt to read in their own language, many will not yet have understood what a word is, nor what the connection is between the spoken and the written word.
- Sentence structure, paragraphing, grammar – none of this means anything to most pupils at this stage.
- Decoding reading – making sense of what we see on the page – is a very involved process, and adults make use of all sorts of clues on the written page – punctuation, paragraphing, use of special words, references to things which have happened, hints as to what can happen. What five to seven year olds have instead is often a visual clue and this clue is vital to meaning.

7. Eight to Ten Year Olds

The majority of eight to ten year olds will already be able to read in their own language and most seem to have little difficulty in transferring their reading skills to English. This means that you can spend much less time teaching the mechanics of reading, and concentrate more on the content. Children whose mother tongue is not based on the Roman alphabet will still have to spend more time on the mechanics of reading, but they know what reading is about, and this speeds up the process.

Reading Texts Based on the Child's Language

When working in the foreign language, it is important that the teacher does not set the pupil a task which he or she does not have the words for in that language. For example, there's no point in pupils bringing in a picture of the place where they live, if they have no words to talk about it.

This type of reading is often based on a picture, but can be about something which has happened, or just about how the pupil is feeling today. It is easiest to start off with a picture.

- a. Ask the child to tell you about the picture.
- b. If he or she gets stuck, ask either/or questions. 'Is she tall or small?'
- c. If this still doesn't work, let the child tell you what he or she wants to say in his or her own language. If this translates to something familiar, talk about it, make sure the child understands. Do not write words which are new or unfamiliar.
- d. Write a sentence in the child's book based on what the child has told you. It can be very simple. 'This is me at home'.
- e. Let the child see you writing the sentence, and say the words as you write them.
- f. The child repeats the sentence after you, pointing to the words as he or she says them.

- g. This is the pupil's reading task, which he or she can read aloud to you.
- h. It shouldn't take more than a couple of minutes to do this – you have a lot of pupils in your class.
- i. This sentence can gradually be built on. 'This is me at home. It's my bedroom. It's blue. It's nice. I have fish in my bedroom.'
- j. As the child's vocabulary increases, you can gradually build up stories (Scott and Yetreberg, 2001, p.56).

The same technique can be used for making up group/class reading books. This technique of writing down what your pupils say or the stories they tell you helps the five to seven year olds to see that print is a means of communication, and that there is a relationship between the amount of talking that is done and the amount of writing on the page. For both age groups, it is important that the pupils see themselves as writers with something to say.

Reading Familiar Nursery Rhymes or Songs

Most children learn nursery rhymes in their mother tongue and in English without having a complete understanding of what they're saying. Some nursery rhymes are produced as books, so the children can 'read' what they already know off by heart. While you might say that this isn't real reading, the pupil can behave like a reader, and it helps to build up confidence. As we have said before, there is also a

very narrow dividing line between knowing something off by heart and actually reading the words (Scott and Yetreberg, 2001, p.56).

8. Reading Aloud

Let us now move on to look at various reading techniques. When we went to school, most of the reading done in class was reading aloud. Reading aloud is not the same as reading silently. It is a separate skill and not one which most people have that much use of outside the classroom. But it can be useful, especially with beginners in a language.

Traditionally, reading aloud is often thought of as reading round the class one by one, and although many children seem to enjoy it, this type of reading aloud is not to be recommended:

- It gives little pleasure and is of little interest to the listeners.
- It encourages stumbling and mistakes in tone, emphasis and expression.
- It may be harmful to the silent reading techniques of the other pupils.
- It is a very inefficient way to use your lesson time.

However, reading aloud is a useful technique when used slightly differently:

- Reading aloud to the teacher should be done individually or in small groups. The reader then has the teacher's full attention.

Reading aloud from a book lets the teacher ask about meaning, what the pupils think of the book, how they are getting on with it, as well as smooth out any language difficulties which arise. High priority should be given to this kind of reading aloud, especially at the beginner stage for all ages. By the time pupils progress to level two, this kind of reading is not so necessary.

- The teacher can use it as a means of training and checking rhythm and pronunciation. The teacher can read a sentence or a phrase and the class or parts of the class can read in chorus after. This is particularly useful if the text is a dialogue, but should only be done for a very short time. Choral reading can easily become a chant if there are a lot of children in the class.
- Reading dialogues aloud in pairs or groups is an efficient way of checking work. The pupils can help each other with words they find difficult to pronounce, and you should try to get them to be a little critical about what they sound like: 'You don't sound very friendly, Michelle' or 'Are you angry, Heinz?' (For details see Scott & Ytreberg, 2001, pp. 57-58.)

9. The Development of Reading Skills

The following activities help children to learn to read:

- Listening to and talking about stories.
- Playing with words.

Teaching Reading skills to Young Learners

- Learning the symbols that represent words.

“These activities are specifically designed to give children the knowledge of oral language, symbolic and pattern representation, and higher-order thinking skills they will need to both decode and comprehend written words” (Linse, 2005, p. 75). However, it should be noted that emphasis should not be placed on decoding. ‘Phonics (sound-letter correspondence) and decoding does not lead a child to becoming a life-long reader. As a teacher of young learners, you want to make sure that children perceive reading as a tool’ (Linse, 2005, p. 76).

Phonics-Based Instruction

This sort of instruction aims at teaching children the basic English language phonics rules so that they can easily decode words. “The purpose of phonics instruction is to teach beginning readers that printed letters represent speech sounds heard in words” (Heilman, 2002, p.1). Thus children can see the correspondence between letters and sounds. However, decoding is different from reading although it constitutes the first step to reading.

There can also be confusion between pronunciation and phonics. “Phonics is the teaching of sounds as part of decoding. Pronunciation, on the other hand, refers to the way one articulates specific sounds” (Linse, 2005, p. 76). Linse maintains that

“pronunciation is only concerned with sounds, and phonics-based instruction is concerned with teaching children that letters can be put together to form words”(p. 76).

Caution should be taken not to overemphasize decoding but to keep meaning in focus when providing phonics instructions. “Phonics instruction should be based on the English words that children have in their oral-language repertoire. In addition learners should already know how to pronounce the word before they are expected to sound it out or read it. They should not have to struggle with pronunciation and phonics simultaneously” (Linse, 2005, p. 77).

Special attention should be paid not to focus so much on phonics instruction and on individual sounds. Children should be able to recognize that they are reading words, sentences, or stories. In this case, phonic instruction enhances comprehension. It is only then does instruction enhance comprehension. Peregoy and Boyle (2004) assert, “English learners should not be involved in phonics instruction that isolates sounds and letters from meaningful use in text” (p. 61).

10. Classroom Activities

Reading activities should be based on the child’s development of native-language literacy skills and oral language skills.

Phonics

Linse (2005) suggests; "One of the easiest ways to begin phonics instruction is by introducing sounds and letters that are associated with specific nouns"(p. 79). When she introduces phonics, Linse starts by teaching the initial sounds and letters of words, usually nouns. Linse cites the following extract and maintains that if you are teaching students the letter *m*, you would also teach them that *m* makes the /m/ sound.

Extract

T: Today we are going to talk about what words start with the /m/ sound. What words start with the /m/ sound? (The teacher writes the letter *M* on the board).

S1: Monkey. (The teacher writes the word monkey on the board under the letter *M*.)

T: Good. Monkey. Monkey starts with the /m/ sound. What letter makes the /m/ sound?

Ss: *M*

T: Very good. The letter *M* makes the /m/ sound. Can you give me the name of another word that starts with the /m/ sound?

S2: Mouse. (The teacher writes the word mouse on the board.)

T: Very good. Can you point to a picture of a mouse? (Students point to a picture of a mouse on the wall.) Good. Who can tell me another word that starts with the /m/ sound?

S3: Milk. (The teacher writes milk on the board.)

T: Very good. How about another word?

S4: Move. (The teacher writes the word move on the board.)

T: Good. Move starts with the /m/ sound. Can everyone move their head? (Students move their heads.) Good. Now I would like a volunteer to come and circle the letter *M* and make the same sound as the letter (Linse, 2005, p.79).

Linse suggests ways for young learners to learn the initial sounds of words:

- Children can cut out pictures of words that start with different letters and then match the pictures with the letters.
- They could also sort pictures that start with a specific phoneme or sound. For example, they could make a collage with picture of things that start with the letter *m* including pictures of a *man*, *moon*, *melon*, *monkey*, and *mask*.

Once children are familiar with the initial sounds made by different consonants, they are ready to start learning short vowel sounds. Often it is easier to start with the short *a* sound /a/ than the

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other short vowel sounds. Children can be taught that /a/ makes the short vowel sound as in *apple*.

When young learners know short vowel sounds and their initial and final consonant sounds, they are ready to learn how to blend sounds together. At this point, in your instructions, you can introduce children to the concept of blending sounds by printing words on the board that follow a consonant-vowel-consonant (CVC) pattern. The words *bat*, *dog*, and *run* follow the CVC pattern. The CVC pattern is used because it is considered to be very predictable, and children will quickly experience success at coding words when they use it. (For details see Linse, pp. 80-81.)

Sight Words

Sight words are high-frequency words children can recognise on sight without having to decode the letters. *The*, *all*, *an*, and *I* are all sight words. Games are engaging ways to teach sight words. For example, young learners can go through a piece of text and count how many times the word *the* occurs in the text.

Children's names can be sight words. Children enjoy reading their own names. An alternative way to call attendance is to print each child's name on a different card. You can then show the names while children read them aloud.

Print-Rich Environment

Children who are exposed to print are likely to learn at a very early age and develop literacy skills (Hudelson 1994, Collins, 2004). Print can be seen all around us in the environment such as signs, labels, the names of hamburger and pizza. These sorts of signs give authentic pieces of environmental print.

Linse (2005) maintains that you should create a print-rich environment in the classroom, which should have meaning for the learners. Items such as the following can be introduced:

- bulletin boards with English language labels such as *Our Work*.
- labels such as *desk, door, window*.
- word lists with vocabulary words that children are learning.
- authentic literature, storybooks and non-fiction titles in English.
- Posters with English-language labels, such as travel posters.
- English-language packages, such as cereal box packages.
- English-language calendars (p. 84).

Linse (2005) assesses that one good place for a print-rich display is on your classroom door. One advantage of using the classroom door is that all of the children pass through the door when they come and go to class. Plus, you can use the print on the door as mini-lessons. You can help children apply phonics rules with these

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different sight words. For example, if you are pointing at the word *door* on the door, you can ask, 'What letter does this start with? What sound does the letter *d* make?' (p. 84)

Language Experience Approach

This approach is designed to help EFL children develop literary skills. Linse (2005) concludes that the language experience approach can be a meaningful and pleasurable group literacy experience. Learners participate in a group activity and then describe what happened in their own words.

The teacher serves as a scribe and writes down everything that the children say on giant size paper. Children then read and re-read the text with their teacher. The teacher can also use the text for phonics instruction.

Linse (2005) suggests that after a visit to a local bakery, students may say and the teacher may write:

We went to the bakery.

We saw really -- really big ovens.

We had some bread.

It tasted really good.

We put butter on it.

It was fun. (p. 85)

This approach can also be suitable for individual children. The teacher can ask an individual child to describe what he did over the weekend.

Using Words

Linse (2005) maintains that you can ask children to come up with their own words related to the topics they are currently studying or words they would just like to know. These words can be written on small index cards or in the students note books.

Questioning Techniques

The major function of questions is to check comprehension, which is the ultimate aim of reading. Questions also help children think about what they are reading. In addition, pre-reading questions arouse children's interest and make them want to read the text.

Linse (2000) gives the following advice: "Your questions should generate interest and enthusiasm for what is being read. They should not make the children feel apprehensive about not answering correctly. Try to ask questions that help children become involved with the text"(p. 86).

Comprehension Strategies

It is often the case that children can say words but can not read; they can decode words but not comprehend them. Therefore, the teacher should use comprehension strategies or techniques that help

children focus on the meaning represented by words. Simple strategies such as the use of context clues and graphic organizers can be used to help children improve their comprehension skills.

Context Clues and Print Conventions

The context can be used as an invaluable tool in comprehension. Beginning readers focus on decoding words and do not even pay attention to pictures. Try to direct children's attention to the pictures that give them clues about the content of what they are reading.

In addition to pictures, print conventions such as capital letters facilitate comprehension. When children are taught that capital letters in English are used for proper names of people and places, the child then can assume that the unfamiliar word in the middle of the sentence with a capital letter is the name of a person or place. "Knowing how punctuation marks work can also facilitate reading. Children who are six years old can learn that when we read, we pause at a period because it is the end of a complete thought, or that an exclamation point tells us that something with emotion has just occurred, or that a question mark lets us know that a question is being asked. Seven-year olds can begin to learn that a comma reminds us to have a little tiny pause before we continue reading" (Linse, 2005, p. 88).

11. Reading Activities with Younger Children

Reading and writing skills should be introduced gradually in the primary foreign language classroom. It is advisable to start with working on sub-skills such as learning to decode familiar written language, match spoken and written forms, or complete short texts with personally relevant information.

At the beginning, written words can be introduced to let children experience printed materials. Pinter (2006) advocates, for example, to label objects such as tables, chairs, pictures, books, etc. by making word cards, and hanging them up round the classroom. This would arouse children's curiosity about printed word and could illustrate to them that oral words can be represented in writing.

Other types of writing can be displayed in the classroom. "The teacher can make posters containing commonly used phrases such as 'sit down', 'come here', 'it's your turn', or a calendar with the names of the days and months, or a class birthday chart, or an English notice board" (Pinter, 2006, p. 69). Such visual aids would attract children's attention and make the links between spoken and written forms clear.

Letter cards or magnetic letters can also be introduced to encourage playing with letters and letter combinations to make words. Children can be asked to connect spoken words and written words by using word cards; for example, to practise matching the

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pictures with the written labels. In order to practise word reading, Pinter (2006) suggests using the following games and activities:

- One well-known memory card game is often played by matching pictures and words.
- Children play in teams picking up two cards each at any one time to see if they match.
- Teachers can make their own word cards and picture cards and play simple matching or categorizing games or spot the missing card.
- Cards can be used during storytelling as well as other activities for vocabulary teaching.
- A lot of work with word-cards will contribute to build up children's sight vocabulary of commonly used words in English.

Some phonics can be used to reinforce regular patterns in English. "Activities can include categorising words according to what sounds they begin with and creating sound banks" (Pinter, 2006, p. 71). To focus children's attention on patterns, the teacher can introduce songs and rhymes.

The English alphabets are usually taught in the form of a song where children do a lot of practice in signing it. "Knowing the names of the letters will not help the children to read but it will enable them to spell words in English. They can practise spelling their own or

... words' named, or play games or simple puzzles such as "word order" (where a letter has been removed from a sentence" (Pinter, 2006, p. 71).

Reading beyond the word level should be introduced gradually. It is possible to use cards and play with sentences and phrases such as chopping up sentences and telling children to put them back in order. Chopping up and reconstructing songs, rhymes and poems can also be possible.

The above-mentioned activities can be of varying difficulty. Children need first to practise familiar language. At a later stage, gap filling activities which combine reading and writing can be introduced. To progress from word reading, children can be asked to follow texts, dialogues, songs, or rhymes in the textbook while listening to them on the tape. In addition, they can read short texts and dialogues which they have already practised orally. (For more details see Pinter, 2006, pp.69- 72).

12. Reading Activities with Older Children

The word level and sentence level practice is also suitable for older children, especially beginners. Older children need to progress further. Soon they will want to skim and scan texts in order to read for meaning. Initially, asking children to read a passage and then to

work out which statements are true or false is a new skill that should be practised.

Pinter (2006) believes that older children can be taught to use many cues while reading:

Semantic cues include those that help them guess the meaning, for example, from illustrations. They will also help as learners look at the structure of sentences and ask questions such as 'Is this a question or a statement?' or 'Is this sentence in the past or in the present?' Phonological cues such as 'how are words like this usually pronounced?' are also useful strategies that can help readers (p. 73).

Older children can be introduced to dictionary work which they often enjoy. Teachers can train children how to use dictionaries so that they can develop good dictionary habits, such as checking important words, taking notes of synonyms or first language equivalents. Pinter (2006) indicates, "In pairs or small groups, children can learn to set each other tasks with dictionaries, such as putting words in alphabetical order or looking up difficult words and letting the other team guess what they mean by choosing the definitions that they think is correct" (p. 74).

13. Summary

In this chapter reasons for introducing reading skills for young learners of English and basic background knowledge about what reading skills involve were introduced. Decoding and comprehension were presented in relation to reading instruction. Various techniques and activities for teaching reading to young learners were provided and illustrated.



8

Fluency and Text Comprehension Instruction

1. Introduction

This chapter provides a bridge between word recognition and comprehension by focusing on fluency in reading which involves recognizing words and comprehending them at the same time. It presents findings of research on fluency instruction and tackles questions the teacher may have about it. It also suggests activities for fluent reading practice.

In addition, the chapter deals with text comprehension instruction. Scientifically-based text-comprehension instruction is then provided, and questions the teacher may have about text comprehension instruction are examined.

2. Fluency Instruction

Fluency is the ability to read a text accurately and quickly. When fluent readers read silently, they recognize words automatically. They group words quickly to help them gain meaning from what

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they read. Fluent readers read aloud effortlessly and with expression. Their reading sounds natural, as if they are speaking. Readers who have not yet developed fluency read slowly, word by word. Their oral reading is choppy and plodding.

Fluency is important because it provides a bridge between word recognition and comprehension. Because fluent readers do not have to concentrate on decoding the word, they can focus their attention on what the text means. They can make connections among the ideas in the text and between the text and their background knowledge. In other words, fluent readers recognize words and comprehend at the same time. Less fluent readers, however, must focus their attention on figuring out the word, leaving them little attention for understanding the text.

Fluency develops gradually over considerable time and through substantial practice. At the earliest stage of reading development, students' oral reading is slow and labored because students are just learning to 'break the code' -- to attach sounds to letters and to blend letter sounds into recognizable words.

Even when a student recognizes many words automatically, their oral reading still may be expressionless, not fluent. To read with expression, readers must be able to divide the text into meaningful chunks. These chunks include phrases and clauses. Readers must pause appropriately within and at the ends of sentences and

when to change emphasis and tone. For example, a reader who lack fluency may read, probably in a monotone, a line from Bill Martin Jr.'s *Brown Bear, Brown Bear* as if it were a list of words rather than a connected text, pausing at inappropriate places:

**Brown/
bear brown/
bear what/
do/
you see.**

a fluent reader will read the same line as:

**Brown bear/
Brown bear/
What do you see?**

Fluency is not a stage of development at which readers can read all words quickly and easily. Fluency changes, depending on what readers are reading, their familiarity with the words, and the amount of their practice with reading text. Even very skilled readers may read in a slow, labored manner when reading text with many unfamiliar words or topics. For example, readers who are usually fluent may not be able to read technical material fluently, such as a textbook about nuclear physics or an article in a medical journal.

A recent large-scale study by the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) found that 44% of a representative sample of the nation's fourth graders were low in fluency. The study also found a close relationship between fluency and reading comprehension. Students who scored lower on measures of fluency scored lower on measures of comprehension, suggesting that fluency is a neglected reading skill in many American classrooms, affecting many students' reading comprehension.

Although some readers may recognize words automatically in isolation or on a list, they may not read the same words fluently when the words appear in sentences in connected text. Instant or automatic word recognition is a necessary, but not sufficient, reading skill. Students who can read words in isolation quickly may not be able to automatically transfer this "speed and accuracy." It is important to provide students with instruction and practice in fluency as they read connected text.

3. What does scientifically based research tell us about fluency instruction?

Researchers have investigated two major instructional approaches related to fluency. In the first approach, repeated and monitored oral reading (commonly called 'repeated reading'), students read passages aloud several times and receive guidance and

feedback from the teacher. In the second approach, independent silent reading, students are encouraged to read extensively on their own. Key findings from the scientific research on fluency instruction include the following conclusions about these two approaches that are of particular interest and value to classroom teachers.

Repeated and monitored oral reading improves reading fluency and overall reading achievement.

Students who read and reread passages orally as they receive guidance and/or feedback become better readers. Repeated oral reading substantially improves words recognition, speed, and accuracy as well as fluency. To a lesser but still considerable extent, repeated oral reading also improves reading comprehension. Repeated oral reading improves the reading ability of all students throughout the elementary school years. It also helps struggling readers at higher grade levels.

Traditionally, many teachers have relied primarily on round-robin reading to develop oral fluency. In round-robin reading, students take turns reading parts of a text aloud (though usually not repeatedly). But round-robin reading in itself does not increase fluency. This may be because students only read small amounts of text, and they usually read this small portion only once.

Researchers have found several effective techniques related to repeated oral reading:

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- students read and reread a text a certain number of times or until a certain level of fluency is reached. Four re-readings are sufficient for most students; and
- oral reading practice is increased through the use of audiotapes, tutors, peer guidance, or other means.

In addition, some effective repeated oral reading techniques have carefully designed feedback to guide the reader's performance.

The Difference between Fluency and Automaticity

Although the terms automaticity and fluency often are used interchangeably, they are not the same thing.

Automaticity is the fast, effortless word recognition that comes with a great deal of reading practice. In the early stages of learning to read, readers may be accurate but slow and inefficient at recognizing words. Continued reading practice helps word recognition become more automatic, rapid, and effortless. Automaticity refers only to accurate, speedy word recognition, not to reading with expression. Therefore, automaticity (or automatic word recognition) is necessary, but not sufficient, for fluency.

4. Questions you may have about fluency instruction

How can I help my students become more fluent readers?

You can help your students become more fluent readers (1) by providing them with models of fluent reading and (2) by having students repeatedly read passages as you offer guidance. In addition, you can help students improve their fluency by combining reading instruction with opportunities for them to read books that meet their independent level of reading ability.

Model fluent reading, then have students reread the text on their own.

By listening to good models of fluent reading, students learn how a reader's voice can help written text make sense. Read aloud daily to your students. By reading effortlessly and with expression, you are modeling for your students how a fluent reader sounds during reading.

After you model how to read the text, you must have the students reread it. By doing this, the students are engaging in repeated reading. Usually, having students read a text four times is sufficient to improve fluency. Remember, however, that instructional time is limited, and it is the actual time that students are actively engaged in reading that produces reading gains. Have other adults read aloud to students. Encourage parents or other family

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members to read aloud to their children at home. The more models of fluent reading the children hear, the better. Of course, hearing a model of fluent reading is not the only benefit of reading aloud to children. Reading to children also increases their knowledge of the word, their vocabulary, their familiarity with written language ("book language"), and their interest in reading.

Modeling Fluent Reading

In the primary grades, you might read aloud from a big book. A big book is an enlarged version of a commercially published book – big enough so that all students can clearly see the text. By pointing to each word as you are reading (using either a pointer or your finger), you can show students where and how you are pausing and how the text shows you when to raise or lower your voice. Occasionally, you can also explain to your students why you are reading in a certain way:

*Teacher: Did you hear how I grouped the words "**Brown bear/ brown bear**"? That's because the words **brown** and **bear** belong together. And then I paused a little before repeating the words.*

Teacher: Did you hear how my voice got louder and more excited right here? That's because the author put in this

exclamation mark (point to it) to show that the speaker was excited or enthusiastic about what she was saying.

Then, have the students practise reading the same text.

Independent level text

- *Relatively easy text for the reader, with no more than approximately 1 in 20 words difficult for the reader (95% success).*

Instructional level text

- *Challenging but manageable text for the reader, with no more than approximately 1 in 10 words difficult for the reader (90% success).*

Frustration Level Text

- *Difficult text for the reader, with more than 1 in 10 words difficult for the reader (less than 90% success).*

Have students repeatedly read passages aloud with guidance

The best strategy for developing reading fluency is to provide your students with many opportunities to read the text orally several times. To do this, you should first know what to have your students read. Second, you should know how to have your students read aloud repeatedly.

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What students should read. Fluency develops as students have many opportunities to practise reading with a high degree of accuracy. Therefore, your students should practise orally rereading text that is reasonably easy for them – that is, text containing mostly words that they know or can decode easily. In other words, the texts should be at the students' independent reading level. A text is at students' independent reading level if they can read it with about 95% accuracy, or misread only about 1 of every 20 words. If the text is more difficult, students will focus so much on word recognition that they will not have an opportunity to develop fluency.

The text your students practice rereading orally should also be relatively short – probably 50-200 words, depending on the age of the students. You should also use a variety of reading materials, including stories, nonfiction, and poetry. Poetry is especially well suited to fluency practice because poems for children are often short and they contain rhythm, rhyme, and meaning, making practice easy, fun, and rewarding.

How to have your students read aloud repeatedly. There are several ways that your students can practice orally rereading text including student-adult reading, choral (or unison) reading, teacher-assisted reading, partner reading, and readers' theatre.

- **Student-adult reading.** In student-adult reading, students read one-on-one with an adult. The adult can read the text first, a

teacher, a model, or a tutor. The adult reads the text aloud, providing the students with a model of fluent reading. Then the student reads the same passage to the adult with the adult providing assistance and encouragement. The student rereads the passage until the reading is quite fluent. This should take approximately three to four re-readings.

Choral reading. In choral, or unison, reading, students read along as a group with you (or another fluent adult reader). Of course, to do so, students must be able to see the same text that you are reading. They might follow along as you read from a big book, or they might read from their own copy of the book you are reading. For choral reading, choose a book that is not too long and that you think is at the independent reading level of most students. Patterned or predictable books are particularly useful for choral reading, because their repetitious style invites students to join in. Begin by reading the book aloud as you model fluent reading.

Then reread the book and invite students to join in as they recognize the words you are reading. Continue rereading the book, encouraging students to read along as they are able. Students should read the book with you three to five times total (though not necessarily on the same day). At this time, students should be able to read the text independently.

- ***Tape-assisted reading.*** In tape-assisted reading, students follow along in their books as they hear a fluent reader read the book on an audiotape. For tape-assisted reading, you need a book at a students' independent reading level and a tape recording for the book read by a fluent reader at about 80-100 words per minute. The tape should not have sound effects or music. For the first reading, the student should follow along with the tape, pointing to each word in her or his book as the reader reads it. Next, the student should try to read aloud along with the tape. Reading along with the tape should continue until the student is able to read the book independently, without the support of the tape.
- ***Partner reading.*** In partner reading, paired students take turns reading aloud to each other. For partner reading, more fluent readers can be paired with less fluent readers. The stronger reader reads a paragraph or page first, providing a model of fluent reading. Then the less fluent reader reads the same text aloud. The stronger student gives help with word recognition and provides feedback and encouragement to the less fluent partner. The less fluent partner rereads the passage until he or she can read it independently. Partner reading need not be done with a more and less fluent reader. In another form of partner reading, children who read at the same level are paired to reread a story that they have received instruction on during a teacher-guided part of the

lesson. Two readers of equal ability can practice rereading after hearing the teacher read the passage.

- ***Readers' theatre.*** In readers' theatre, students rehearse and perform a play for peers or others. They read from scripts that have been derived from books that are rich in dialogue. Students play characters who speak lines or a narrator who shares necessary background information. Readers' theatre provides readers with a legitimate reason to reread text and to practice fluency. Readers' theatre also promotes cooperative interaction with peers and makes the reading task appealing.

Activities for Repeated Oral Reading Practice

- ***Student-adult reading*** – reading one-on-one with an adult who provides a model of fluent reading, helps with word recognition, and provides feedback.
- ***Choral reading*** – reading aloud simultaneously in a group.
- ***Tape-assisted reading*** – reading aloud simultaneously or as an echo with an audio-taped model.
- ***Partner reading*** – reading aloud with a more fluent partner (or with a partner of equal ability) who provides a model of fluent reading, helps with word recognition, and provides feedback.

- *Readers' theatre* -- the rehearsing and performing before an audience of a dialogue-rich script derived from a book

What should I do about silent, independent reading in the classroom?

Reading fluency growth is greatest when students are working directly with you. Therefore, you should use most of your allocated reading instruction time for direct teaching of reading skills and strategies. Although silent, independent reading may be a way to increase fluency and reading achievement, it should not be used in place of direct instruction in reading.

Direct instruction is especially important for readers who are struggling. Readers who have not yet attained fluency are not likely to make effective and efficient use of silent, independent reading time. For these students, independent reading takes time away from needed reading instruction.

Rather than allocating instructional time for independent reading in the classroom, encourage your students to read more outside of school. They can read with an adult or other family member. Or they can read on their own with books at their independent reading level. Of course, students might also read on their own during independent work time in the classroom – for example, as another

when a group is receiving reading instruction, or after they have complete one activity and are waiting for a new activity to begin.

Procedure for Calculating Words Correct Per Minute

One-minute reading: Total word read – errors = words correct per minute

- *Select two or three brief passages from a grade-level basal text or other grade-level material (regardless of students' instructional levels).*
- *Have individual students read each passage aloud for exactly one minute.*
- *Count the total number of words the student read for each passage. Compute the average number of words read per minute.*
- *Count the number of errors the student made on each passage. Compute the average number of errors per minute.*
- *Subtract the average number of errors read per minute from the average total number of words read per minute. The result is the average number of words correct per minute (WCPM).*
- *Repeat the procedure several times during the year. Graphing students WCPM throughout the year easily captures their reading growth.*

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- *Compare the results with published norms or standards to determine whether students are making suitable progress in their fluency. For example, according to one published norm, students should be reading approximately 60 words per minute correctly by the end of first grade, 90-100 words per minute correctly by the end of second grade, and approximately 114 words per minute correctly by the end of third grade.*

When should fluency instruction begin? When should it end?

Fluency instruction is useful when students are not automatic at recognizing the words in their texts. How can you tell when students are not automatic? There is a strong indication that a student needs fluency instruction:

- if you ask the student to read orally from a text that he or she has not practiced, and the student makes more than 10% word recognition errors;
- if the student cannot read orally with expression; or
- if the student's comprehension is poor for the text that she or he reads orally.

Is increasing word recognition skills sufficient for developing fluency?

Isolated word recognition is a necessary but not sufficient condition for fluent reading. Throughout much of the twentieth century, it was widely assumed that fluency was the result of word recognition proficiency. Instruction, therefore, focused primarily on the development of word recognition. In recent years, however, research has shown that fluency is a separate component of reading that can be developed through instruction.

Having students review and rehearse word lists (for example, by using flash cards) may improve their ability to recognize the word in isolation, but this ability may not transfer to word presented in actual texts. Developing reading fluency in texts must be developed systematically.

Should I assess fluency? If so, how?

You should formally and informally assess fluency regularly to ensure that your students are making appropriate progress. The most informal assessment is simply listening to students read aloud and making a judgment about their progress in fluency. You should however, also include more formal measures of fluency. For example, the student's reading rate should be faster than 90 words a minute, the student should be able to read orally with expression,

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and the student should be able to comprehend what is read while reading orally.

Probably the easiest way to formally assess fluency is to take timed samples of students' reading and to compare their performance (number of words read correctly per minute) with published oral reading fluency norms or standards.

Monitoring your students' progress in reading fluency will help you determine the effectiveness of your instructional goals. Also, seeing their fluency growth reflected in the graphs you keep can motivate students.

Other procedures that have been used for measuring fluency include Informal Reading Inventories (IRIs), miscue analysis, and running records. The purpose of these procedures, however, is to identify the kinds of word recognition problems students may have, not to measure fluency. Also, these procedures are quite time-consuming. Simpler measures of speed and accuracy, such as calculating words read correctly per minute, are more appropriate for monitoring fluency (Armbruster et al., 2001, pp. 19-27.)

5. Text Comprehension Instruction

Comprehension is the reason for reading. If readers can read the words but do not understand what they are reading, they are not really reading.

As they read, good readers are both purposeful and active.

Good readers are purposeful.

Good readers have a purpose for reading. They may read to find out how to use a food processor, read a guidebook to gather information about national parks, read a textbook to satisfy the requirements of a course, read a magazine for entertainment, or read classic novel to experience the pleasures of great literature.

Good readers are active.

Good readers think actively as they read. To make sense of what they read, good readers engage in a complicated process. Using their experiences and knowledge of the world, their knowledge of vocabulary and language structure, and their knowledge of reading strategies (or plans), good readers make sense of the text and know how to get the most out of it. They know when they have problems with understanding and how to resolve these problems as they occur.

Research over 30 years has shown that instruction in comprehension can help students understand what they read, remember what they read, and communicate with others about what they read.

6. What does scientifically based research tell us about effective text comprehension instruction?

The scientific research on text comprehension instruction reveals important information about what students should be taught. The following key findings are of particular interest and value to classroom teachers.

Text comprehension can be improved by instruction that helps readers use specific comprehension strategies.

Comprehension strategies are conscious plans -- sets of steps that good readers use to make sense of text. Comprehension strategy instruction helps students become purposeful, active readers who are in control of their own reading comprehension.

The following six strategies appear to have a firm scientific basis for improving text comprehension.

Monitoring Comprehension.

Students who are good at monitoring their comprehension know when they understand what they read and when they do not. They have strategies to 'fix up' problems in their understanding as the problems arise. Research shows that instruction, even in the early grades, can help students become better at monitoring their comprehension.

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Comprehension monitoring instruction teaches students to:

- be aware of what they **do** understand,
- identify what they **do not** understand, and
- use appropriate "fix-up" strategies to resolve problems in comprehension.

Students may use several comprehension monitoring strategies:

- Identify where the difficulty occurs (*"I don't understand the second paragraph on page 76. "*)
- Identify what the difficulty is (*"I don't get what the author means when she says, 'Arriving in America was a milestone in my grandmother's life' "*).
- Restate the difficult sentence or passage in their own words (*"Oh, so the author means that coming to America was a very important event in her grandmother's life."*).
- Look back through the text (*"The author talked about M. McBride in Chapter 2, but I don't remember much about him. Maybe if I reread that chapter, I can figure out why he's acting this way now."*).
- Look forward in the text for information that might help them to resolve the difficulty.

(*"The text says, 'The groundwater may form a stream or pond or create a wetland. People can also bring groundwater to the*

surface.' Hmm, I don't understand how people can do that... Oh, the next section is called 'Wells.' I'll read this section to see if it tells how they do it.")

Metacognition

Metacognition can be defined as "thinking about thinking". Good readers use metacognitive strategies to think about and have control over their reading.

Before reading, they might clarify their purpose for reading and preview the text. During reading, they might monitor their understanding, adjusting their reading speed to fit the difficulty of the text, and "fixing up" any comprehension problems they have. After reading, they check their understanding of what they read.

Comprehension monitoring, a critical part of metacognition, has received a great deal of attention in the reading research.

Using graphic and semantic organizers.

Graphic organizers illustrate concepts and interrelationships among concepts in a text, using diagrams or other pictorial devices. Graphic organizers are known by different names, such as maps, webs, graphs, charts, frames, or clusters. Semantic organizers (also called semantic maps or semantic webs) are graphic organizers that look somewhat like a spider web. In a semantic organizer, lines connect a central concept to a variety of related ideas and events.

Regardless of the label, graphic organizers can help readers focus on concepts and how they are related to other concepts. Graphic organizers help students read to learn from informational text in the content areas, such as science and social studies textbooks and trade books. Used with informational text, graphic organizers can help students see how concepts fit common text structures. Graphic organizers are also used with narrative text, or stories, as story maps.

Graphic organizers can:

- help students focus on text structure as they read;
- provide students with tools they can use to examine and visually represent relationships in a text; and
- help students write well-organized summaries of a text.

Answering questions.

Teachers have long used questions to guide and monitor students' learning. Research shows that teacher questioning strongly supports and advances students' learning from reading.

Questions appear to be effective for improving learning from reading because they:

- give students a purpose for reading;
- focus students' attention on what they are to learn;
- help students to think actively as they read;

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- encourage students to monitor their comprehension; and
- help students to review content and relate what they have learned to what they already know.

Question-answering instruction encourages students to learn to answer questions better and, therefore, to learn more as they read. One type of question-answering instruction simply teaches students to look back in the text to find answers to questions that they cannot answer after the initial reading. Another type helps students understand question-answer relationships –the relationships between questions and where the answers to those questions are found. In this instruction, readers learn to answer questions that require an understanding of information that is:

- text explicit (stated explicitly in a single sentence);
- text implicit (implied by information presented in two or more sentences); or
- scriptal (not found in the text at all, but part of the reader's prior knowledge or experience).

Generating questions

Teaching students to ask their own questions improves their active processing of text and their comprehension. By generating questions, students become aware of whether they can answer the questions and if they understand what they are reading. Students

learn to ask themselves questions that require them to integrate information from different segments of text. For example, students can be taught to ask main idea questions that relate to important information in a text.

Examples of Question-Answer Relationships

Text: (from the Skirt, by Gary Soto)

After stepping off the bus, Miata Ramirez turned around and gasped, "Ay!" The school bus lurched, coughed a puff of stinky exhaust, and made a wide turn at the corner. The driver strained as he worked the steering wheel like the horns of a bull.

Miata yelled for the driver to stop. She started running after the bus. Her hair whipped against her shoulders. A large book bag tugged at her arm with each running step, and head earrings jingled as they banged against her neck.

"My skirt!" she cried loudly. "Stop!"

Question: Did Miata try to get the driver to stop?

Answer: Yes.

Question-Answer Relationship (Text explicit, because the information is given in one sentence): "Miata yelled for the driver to stop."

Question: Why did Miata want the driver to stop?

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Answer: *She suddenly remembered that she had left a skirt on the bus.*

Question-Answer Relationship (Text implicit, because the information must be inferred from the different parts of the text): *Miata is crying "My skirt!" as she is trying to get the driver to stop.*

Question: *Was the skirt important to Miata?*

Answer: *Yes,*

Question-Answer Relationship (Scriptural, because the information is not contained in the text, but must be drawn from the reader's prior knowledge): *She probably would not have tried so hard to get the driver to stop if the skirt were not important to her.*

Recognizing story structure.

Story structure refers to the way the content and events of a story are organized into a plot. Students who can recognize story structure have greater appreciation, understanding, and memory for stories. In story structure instruction, students learn to identify the categories of content (setting, initiating events, internal reactions, goals, attempts, and outcomes) and how this content is organized into a plot. Often, students learn to recognize story structure through the use of story maps. Story maps, a type of graphic organizer, show the sequence of

events in simple stories. Instruction in the content and organization of stories improves students' comprehension and memory of stories:

Summarizing

A summary is a synthesis of the important ideas in a text. Summarizing requires students to determine what is important in what they are reading, to condense this information, and to put it into their own words. Instruction in summarizing helps students:

- identify or generate main ideas;
- connect the main or central ideas;
- eliminate redundant and unnecessary information; and
- remember what they read.

Students can be taught to use comprehension strategies.

In addition to identifying which comprehension strategies are effective, scientific research provides guidelines for how to teach comprehension strategies.

Effective comprehension strategy instruction is explicit, or direct.

Research shows that explicit teaching techniques are particularly effective for comprehension strategy instruction. In explicit instruction, teachers tell readers why and when they should use strategies, what strategies to use, and how to apply them. The steps

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of explicit instruction typically include direct explanation, teacher modeling ("thinking aloud"), guided practice, and application.

- **Direct explanation.** The teacher explains to students why the strategy helps comprehension and when to apply the strategy.

- **Modeling.** The teacher models, or demonstrates, how to apply the strategy, usually by "thinking aloud" while reading the text that the students are using.

- **Guided practice.** The teacher guides and assists students as they learn how and when to apply the strategy.

- **Application.** The teacher helps students practice the strategy until they can apply it independently.

Effective comprehension strategy instruction can be accomplished through cooperative learning.

Cooperative learning (and the closely related concept, collaborative learning) involves students working together as partners or in small groups on clearly defined tasks. Cooperative learning instruction has been used successfully to teach comprehension strategies in content-area subjects. Students work together to understand content-area texts, helping each other learn and apply comprehension strategies. Teachers help students learn to work in groups. Teachers also provide demonstrations of the comprehension strategies and monitor the progress of students.

Effective instruction helps readers use comprehension strategies flexibly and in combination.

Although it can be helpful to provide students with instruction in individual comprehension strategies, good readers must be able to coordinate and adjust several strategies to assist comprehension.

Multiple-strategy instruction teaches students how to use... strategies flexibly as they are needed to assist their comprehension. In a well-known example of multiple-strategy instruction called "reciprocal teaching", the teacher and students work together so that the students learn four comprehension strategies:

- asking questions about the text they are reading;
- summarizing parts of the text;
- clarifying words and sentences they don't understand; and
- predicting what might occur next in the text.

Teachers and students use these four strategies flexibly as they are needed in reading literature and informational texts.

7. Questions you may have about text comprehension instruction

Is enough known about comprehension strategy instruction for me to implement it in my classroom?

Yes. Scientific study of text comprehension instruction over the past 30 years has suggested instructional approaches that are ready to be implemented in classrooms.

When should text comprehension instruction begin?

Even teachers in the primary grades can begin to build the foundation for reading comprehension. Reading is a complex process that develops over time. Although the basics of reading – word recognition and fluency – can be learned in a few years, reading to learn subject matter does not occur automatically once students have "learned to read". Teachers should emphasize text comprehension from the beginning, rather than waiting until students have mastered "the basics" of reading. Instruction at all grade levels can benefit from showing students how reading is a process of making sense out of text, or constructing meaning. Beginning readers, as well as more advanced readers, must understand that the ultimate goal of reading is comprehension.

You can highlight meaning in all interactions with text. Talk about the content, whether reading aloud to students or guiding them

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in reading on their own. Model, or "think aloud", about your own thinking and understanding as you read. Lead students in a discussion about the meaning of what they are reading. Help students relate the content to their experience and to other texts they have read. Encourage students to ask questions about the text.

Has research identified comprehension strategies other than the six described here?

The six strategies have received the strongest scientific support. The following strategies, however, have received some support from research. You may want to consider them for use in your classroom.

Making use of prior knowledge

Good readers draw on prior knowledge and experience to help them understand what they are reading. You can help your students make use of their prior knowledge to improve their comprehension. Before your students read, preview the text with them. As part of previewing, ask the students what they already know about the content of the selection (for example, the topic, the concept, or the time period). Ask them what they know about the author and what text structure he or she is likely to use. Discuss the important vocabulary used in the text. Show students some pictures or diagrams to prepare them for what they are about to read.

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Using mental imagery

Good readers often form mental picture, or images, as they read. Readers (especially younger readers) who visualize during reading understand and remember what they read better than readers who do not visualize. Help your students learn to form visual images of what they are reading. For example, urge them to picture a setting, character, or event described in the text.

Which comprehension strategies should be taught?

When should they be taught?

Comprehension strategies are not ends in themselves; they are means of helping your students understand what they are reading. Help your students learn to use comprehension strategies in natural learning situations – for example, as they read in the content areas. If your students are struggling to identify and remember the main points in a chapter they are reading in their social studies textbook, teach them how to write summaries. Or, if students have read a chapter in their science textbook but are unable to answer questions about the chapter, teach them question-answering strategies. When your students find that using comprehension strategies can help them to learn, they are more likely to be motivated and involved actively in learning.

Keep in mind that not all comprehension strategies work for all types of text. Obviously, you can only teach story structure when students are reading stories, not informational text or poetry (Armbruster et al., 2001, pp. 41-47.)

8. Summary

To sum up, this chapter illustrated fluency and text comprehension instruction. Fluency is the ability to read a text accurately and quickly. Fluency is important because it frees students to understand what they read. Reading fluency can be developed by modeling fluent reading by having students engage in repeated oral reading. Monitoring students' progress in reading fluency is useful in evaluating instruction, and setting instructional goals can be motivating to students.

Text comprehension is important because comprehension is the reason for reading. Text comprehension is purposeful and active. It can be developed by teaching comprehension strategies. Text comprehension strategies can be taught through explicit instruction, through cooperative learning, and by helping readers use strategies flexibly and in combination. Note: The content of this chapter is taken literally from Armbruster et al. (2001, pp. 19-27, 41-47).



9

Technology and Teaching Children to Read

1. Introduction

A significant base of research, developed over many years, is available to inform educators about effective approaches to teaching children to read. However, research on the use of multimedia digital technologies to enhance reading instruction is in its infancy.

This chapter considers the issue of technology and teaching children in the elementary grades to read. It points out the building blocks of an effective elementary reading program, and presents a framework for technology to support reading instruction. The chapter, then, focuses on the use of technology in teaching the five components of effective reading instruction: phonemic awareness instruction, phonics instruction, fluency instruction, vocabulary instruction, and text comprehension instruction.

2. The Building Blocks of an Effective Elementary Reading Program

At the request of the U.S. Congress, the National Reading Panel conducted an extensive review of the research on teaching children to read and, in 2000, issued its report on the research-based

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components of effective reading instruction. The panel concluded that an effective approach must contain the following five components:

1. *Phonemic awareness instruction* to help children learn to segment speech into individual sounds (phonemes) and to blend sounds to form words. The ability to work with speech sounds in these ways is an essential foundation for phonics instruction.
2. *Phonics instruction* to teach children the relationships between sounds and letters. Phonics skills help children recognize words and decode new written words to their spoken forms.
3. *Fluency instruction* to help children learn to read text with speed, accuracy, and proper expression. Fluency is a critical component of learning to comprehend text.
4. *Vocabulary instruction* to increase the number of words for which children know the meanings. This includes helping children understand that a given word can have different meanings depending upon the context.
5. *Text comprehension instruction* to help children develop purposeful and active strategies for understanding what they read. These strategies include monitoring children's understandings as they read, generating and answering questions about the text, and summarizing important ideas from the text.

These five components need to be integrated as children learn to read. For example, students who cannot recognize or decode written words, cannot read fluently, or don't understand the meanings of words, will be limited in their text-comprehension abilities. Reading meaningful texts at appropriate levels of difficulty is one way for children to increase their vocabulary and practice their phonics skills. To construct meaning from written texts, skilled readers bring together all the components of reading in combination with their prior knowledge about what they are reading. (See chapters 6, 8 and 11 for details on these five components of building blocks for teaching children to read).

3. A Framework for Technology to Support Reading Instruction

Before elaborating upon the five building blocks of reading instruction and examining the potential uses of technology for each one, we will provide a general framework of multimedia computer capabilities that can be employed to help children learn to read. Note that this framework for technology is based upon a critical assumption: *Knowledgeable and dedicated teachers are the critical element in successful reading instruction programs.* While technology can support these teachers and help them be more successful with all children, it can never replace qualified teachers

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because teaching children to read is too complex – it requires insight into children's cognitive abilities and emotional needs, and is dependent upon the types of reinforcement, guidance, and support that can only be provided by caring, knowledgeable teachers.

The technology framework consists of four general capabilities that computers can provide to support students learning to read. Computers can:

- present information and activities to students;
- assess students' work;
- respond to students' work; and
- provide scaffolds, such as access to word pronunciation and definitions, that help students read successfully

These four key capabilities, whether supplied by teachers using traditional materials, such as books and audiotapes, or by computers, have proven to be important components in reading instruction. Computers can now provide each of these capabilities to support teaching and learning in new ways, as is described in the following section. (See Sherman, Kleiman and Peterson, 2007 for details on the literal content of this chapter.)

Present information and activities

Multimedia computers can present any type of auditory or visual materials – including speech, text, music, animations,

photographs, or videos – alone or in different combinations. They can link different types of representations such as pictures with sounds, oral readings with written text, videos with subtitles, or any other combinations that might reinforce teaching and learning. They can also provide enormous flexibility, allowing the user to set the speed of speech, decide whether written text is also read aloud, choose the language presented in text and speech, or decide whether to repeat the presentation. This flexibility can be valuable in presenting educational tasks – such as phonemic awareness practice, phonics lessons and drills, fluency practice, vocabulary instruction, and opportunities to learn and apply text-comprehension strategies to students.

Assess students' work

Computers can accept a variety of inputs from students, ranging from mouse clicks to written text to spoken words. (A wide variety of special input devices, such as touch screens, special keyboards, and single switch devices are also available for young children and students with special needs.) Computers can be programmed to check a child's work to determine whether he or she selected the correct word or picture, typed a correct word, said the correct word, or, with recent advances in computerized speech recognition, read a passage fluently.

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Computers are, of course, highly capable of recording and organizing information, and reporting that information in multiple formats. Computers can, for example, record the responses of all students in a class to a set of letter-sound matching problems and then immediately report to the teacher the errors made by each individual student and the most common errors made by the entire class. In more complex tasks involving oral reading or text comprehension, computers can serve as convenient recording and reporting devices for teachers, helping them track student progress far more conveniently than other means of data collection. This capability can be used to inform teachers' instructional decisions and to make documenting students' progress more efficient.

Respond to students' work

Effective instruction needs to be interactive – when children respond to questions or read aloud, they need feedback to know whether they are correct, instruction to help them learn more, and opportunities to engage in additional work at appropriate levels to further their learning.

In terms of responding to students' work, computers have both some limitations and some advantages over teachers. When tasks require simple inputs, such as selecting from presented options or typing a word, computers can be programmed to immediately

evaluate each response and provide appropriate feedback. This feedback can be in the form of positive messages when the child is correct, and hints, additional chances, or corrected answers when the child is incorrect. Most importantly, computers can be programmed to adjust the task presented to be based on feedback from previous performances. For example, a phonics instruction programme can analyze a child's pattern of correct and incorrect responses and provide that child with practice on the specific letter-sound correspondences that he or she has not yet mastered. A comprehension program can assess a child's responses to an initial set of comprehension questions and, depending upon the child's level of success, provide easier or more challenging text and questions. New products are able to assess students' oral reading as they read and provide immediate feedback such as pronouncing words on which the child hesitates or mispronounces. (While the ability to have computers understand and respond to students' language in both text and spoken forms has advanced significantly in recent years, it is still far more limited and far less flexible than what a teacher can provide.)

Provide scaffolds that help students read successfully

A skilled reader uses multiple cues in reading simultaneously – recognizing familiar words, using word patterns and meanings to group words into meaningful clusters, using prior knowledge and

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context to understand the meaning of the text, and applying text-comprehension strategies. In learning to read, these processes should be interconnected; a child should apply phonics in reading text and in writing, learn vocabulary in the context of reading meaningful text, and read fluently in order to comprehend successfully.

As a child is learning, the multifaceted requirements of reading can cause "cognitive overload," in which there are too many competing demands for the child to succeed in reading fluently with comprehension. For example, children who struggle to decode the individual words of a story will devote all of their attention to the individual word level, and, therefore, be unsuccessful in understanding the events in the story.

Teachers strive to select appropriate reading materials, pose appropriate tasks, guide students' practice, and adjust instructional interactions to provide an appropriate level of challenge – neither so easy that it leads to boredom nor so difficult that it leads to frustration – for each student. For complex tasks, teachers provide scaffolds that enable children to engage successfully in reading with comprehension. For example, teachers may read a text aloud before asking children to read it on their own, review new vocabulary words before asking children to read a passage aloud, and provide immediate help when the child hesitates on or misreads a word.

Scaffolds for learning to read are analogous to training wheels for a child learning to ride a bicycle. Training wheels let the child experience getting around on a bicycle while focusing on pedaling and steering. Reading scaffolds let children experience interesting stories on their own, while providing opportunities to continue mastering phonics, vocabulary, fluency, and comprehension. Teachers must also make instructional decisions about when to reduce the scaffolding and have children be responsible for reading without them – analogous to deciding when the novice cyclist is ready to try without the training wheels.

Computers can provide powerful scaffolds; for example, a student with limited phonics skills or vocabulary can benefit from scaffolding in the form of an online dictionary that, at the click of a mouse, can speak the word and display its meaning. Similarly, students who have difficulty chunking sentences into meaningful phrases – a critical component of fluent reading – can have the computer highlight text in meaningful chunks to provide models of how words are grouped for fluent reading. Or a child weak in comprehension strategies can be guided by the computer to pose and answer questions, create concept maps, or check his or her own understanding while reading on-screen text. New technologies enable computers to provide immediate help when children need it in oral reading. The role of the computer is to make individualized,

responsive scaffolds available for each child – providing, as close as possible, what a teacher would provide when working individually with a student.

4. Technology and the Building Blocks for Teaching Children to Read

Phonemic Awareness

Phonemic awareness, typically a focus in grades K and 1, is the ability to notice, think about, and work with the individual sounds of spoken words – for example, to know that "cat" consists of three sounds, /c/, /a/, and /t/; that the first sound matches the first sound of "cake" and that the last two sounds match those of "hat", "rat", "bat", and "that." Understanding that words are made up of speech sounds, and being able to compare sounds in different words, divide words into constituent sounds, and blend sounds together to form words, all form an important foundation for learning to read. Note that the word "phoneme" refers to the individual sounds of language, and that "phonemic awareness" is about awareness of speech sounds separate from written forms of language. One could have phonemic awareness without ever encountering a written language.

Teaching Recommendations

- Use activities in which children work with the sound of words in a variety of ways, such as: blending sequences of spoken sounds to form a word, as in blending /b/ /i/ /g/ to form the word **big**; segmenting words into separate sounds, for example, in which they segment **big** into its three constituent sounds, /b/ /i/ / g/; adding sounds, as in adding /s/ to "mile" to make "smile"; substituting sounds, as in change /r/ in "run" to /b/ to form "bun", and other activities involving identifying, matching, and altering the sounds of words.
- Adjust activities to the child's level of phonemic awareness. For example, identifying initial sounds is easier than identifying all the sounds in a word.
- Teach sounds along with the letters of the alphabet to provide a bridge between phonemic awareness and phonics.
- Use small-group instruction whenever possible so children can both benefit from listening to their classmates respond and receive feedback from the teacher.

Technology

Computers can present a variety of phonemic awareness practice activities and provide feedback to students and reports to teachers about students' progress. Multimedia presentations can address many

different learning styles by integrating sound, text, and moving images. These presentations can also accept input from a variety of sources by letting students enter responses by pointing, typing, or speaking. For example, many software programs for young children incorporate matching activities in which students are asked to match a sound with pictures of objects that start with that sound, a sequence of sounds with the word they form when blended together, or pictures of objects with names that start with the same sound or which rhyme. In these types of activities, many of the capabilities of computers described above can be employed to:

- provide tasks that involve both segmenting words into sounds and blending sounds into words;
- provide immediate feedback to let students know whether their answers were correct, give them hints or additional chances, and provide correct answers;
- individualize problem sets to focus on the phonemes that the student has not yet mastered;
- repeat activities and alter the speed of speech to meet individual needs;
- provide activities that ask children to match sounds and letters;
- provide activities designed for two or three children to work together;

- provide game contexts, attractive visual presentations, and motivating speech, to engage and hold children's interest;
- provide reports for teachers and children's progress and areas in which individual children need additional work; and
- engage children in productive self-directed work on phonemic awareness while the teacher works directly with other children, thereby helping the teacher meet the individual needs of each student.

Phonics

Phonics instruction focuses on the letter-sound correspondences so that children learn that the three sounds of "cat" correspond to the three letters, **c**, **a**, and **t**. Knowing the relationships between written letters and spoken sounds helps children recognize familiar written words and decode new written words so they can apply their knowledge of the spoken words. While the English language contains many irregularly spelled words that don't follow the standard letter-sound correspondences, most of these words contain some regular letter-sound relationships, and knowledge of phonics supports children's memory for specific words. Phonics is typically a major focus of reading instruction in grades K-2, but is best combined with the other components.

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Teaching Recommendations

- Explicitly teach children the letter-sound relationships, including consonants, vowels, and larger units of language (for example, th, ea, ing) in a clearly defined sequence.
- Adapt phonics instructions to the needs of individual students based upon assessments of their knowledge of letter-sound correspondences.
- Combine phonics instruction with phonemic awareness activities, learning to recognize and write the letters, listening to stories and information texts read aloud, reading simple text, and writing. Make sure to select materials that contain many words that students can decode with the phonics they have learned.

Technology

Many of the capabilities of computers for phonics instruction overlap those already described for phonemic awareness instruction. In fact, many of the software applications that support phonics development also make use of additional scaffolding to enable phonics practice to be integrated with reading meaningful text and with students' writing. Potential uses of technology to enhance phonics instruction include the ability to:

- provide tasks that involve students matching sounds and letters, and spoken and written words. In some cases, this simply

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involves adding letters and a written word component to phonemic awareness activities;

- provide immediate feedback to let students know whether their answers were correct, give them hints or additional chances, and provide correct answers;
- individualize problem sets and present stories to focus on the letter-sound correspondences and words that the student has not yet mastered;
- provide as many repetitions as necessary and alter the speed of speech to meet individual needs;
- provide game contexts, attractive visual presentations, and motivating speech, to engage and hold children's interest;
- provide reports for teachers' and children's progress and areas in which individual children need additional work;
- provide texts for children to read with scaffolds to support phonic skills – for example, software can enable a child to click on any word and hear the individual sounds of the word or the whole spoken word; and
- engage children in productive self-directed work on phonics while the teacher works directly with other children, thereby helping the teacher meet the individual needs of each student.

Fluency

Fluency is the ability to read a text accurately and quickly with appropriate pacing and intonation. Fluent readers read aloud effortlessly and with expression, as if they were speaking, while readers who are not yet fluent read slowly, word by word. To read fluently and with expression, readers must be able to easily recognize or decode individual words and divide the text into meaningful phrases and clauses. Fluency provides a bridge between word recognition and comprehension. Children who cannot read texts fluently often have trouble fully comprehending the material.

Teaching Recommendations

- Model fluent reading and then have students read the same text aloud.
- Provide guidance and feedback during repeated oral reading in order to improve word recognition, speed, and accuracy as well as fluency; oral reading with support (for example, help with unknown words) and feedback provide more effective practice to increase fluency than silent, independent reading.
- Increase oral reading practice through the use of audiotapes, tutors, peer guidance, or other means that provide both modeling of fluent reading and feedback.

- Give students books in which they can read 95% of the words; fluency develops as a result of many opportunities to practice reading with a high degree of success.

Technology

Electronic books, or e-books, present traditional picture book text and images in an alternative on-screen format. The simplest electronic books simply transfer the story from paper to the screen, and allow the child to listen as the program reads the story aloud. Some e-books may also highlight each word as the child progresses through the book. More complex electronic books create a more malleable story, allowing children to manipulate the text and introduce features not found in traditional books (Labbo & Kuhn 1998).

E-books, with features designed specifically to support children learning to read fluently, can provide multiple supports for fluency instruction, including the ability to:

- provide a model of fluent oral reading;
- provide on-demand or automated help in decoding individual words, so that a problem with a few words does not disrupt the child reading;
- provide visual highlighting of phrases to guide the child in learning to read with expression;

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- allow beginning readers to tackle more varied and challenging texts with additional support for pronunciation and meaning, thereby allowing them to "read" on their own more successfully and gain additional experience with text;
- provide speech recognition tools so that students can get immediate help while reading aloud; and
- provide recording and analysis tools for teachers to help them assess students' levels of fluency and to inform instructional decisions.

Vocabulary

Vocabulary instruction focuses on students expanding the breadth and depth of vocabulary knowledge. Reading specialists refer to oral vocabulary, the words one knows in speech, and reading vocabulary, the words one knows in print. Beginning readers use their oral vocabulary to make sense of the words they see in print, and thereby extend their reading vocabulary. As they begin to read, they learn the meaning of new words that are not part of their oral vocabulary through direct instruction, using dictionaries, and through the use of the context in which they read the words.

Teaching Recommendations

- Encourage activities that support vocabulary growth. Children learn the meanings of most words indirectly, through everyday

experiences with oral and written language, including conversations with adults, listening to adults read to them and discussing unfamiliar words, and through reading extensively on their own.

- Teach key vocabulary words directly, for example by reviewing new vocabulary words in a text before students read the text.
- Provide lessons on difficult words, such as words with multiple meanings, words that are spelled alike but pronounced differently, and idioms.
- Teach word learning strategies, such as the use of the dictionary and thesaurus; the use of suffixes, prefixes, and roots; and the use of context clues to figure out the meanings of words.
- Have students make repeated use of new words in different contexts, including reading, discussions, and writing.

Technology

The teaching recommendations suggest several ways in which technology can support vocabulary development in children, including the ability to:

- provide online, interactive vocabulary lessons, with the features to engage students, provide feedback, individualize instruction, and keep records for teachers;

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- provide online dictionaries, thesauri, and encyclopedias, with speech capabilities, to give students access to tools to use with their word learning strategies;
- provide online texts with hyperlinks that give students definitions of words and further information about key ideas in the text; and
- provide students with additional opportunities to extend their vocabularies by increasing the amount of reading and writing they do through the use of online materials and exchanges. Examples of such opportunities include websites, discussions, online publishing, web logs, and other technology-enabled uses of text.

Text Comprehension

Text comprehension instruction helps children develop purposeful and active strategies for understanding what they read. This includes learning to monitor their own comprehension to be aware of what they do and do not understand, and to know how to resolve problems in comprehension. All the prior components are critical parts of text comprehension – students who cannot recognize or decode written words, cannot read fluently, or don't know the meanings of words will be limited in their abilities to comprehend text. Text comprehension instruction also includes teaching a variety of strategies that have been shown to increase understanding and recall, such as generating questions about the text, predicting what will happen next,

summarizing ideas, forming mental pictures while reading, and comparing prior knowledge to the information in the text.

Teaching Recommendations

- Help students to monitor their comprehension for self awareness of what they do and do not understand, and ensure that they have strategies to reread and further their understandings.
- Encourage students to use graphic and semantic organizers, such as concept maps and other conceptual organizers, to help focus on the concepts in a text and relationships among those concepts.
- Help students to generate questions and seek answers to their questions in the text, which sets purposes for reading, focuses attention on what is learned, encourages comprehension-monitoring, and helps relate new information from the text to prior knowledge.
- Teach students to recognize the structure of stories so they can place what they are reading into a coherent framework of elements such as the setting, initiating events, internal reactions of characters, goals, attempts, and outcomes.
- Guide students to summarize the information they read as a way of monitoring comprehension and extracting and articulating key ideas.

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The above strategies should be taught from the early stages of reading, not just after "basics" are mastered. It is critical that students learn to use the strategies flexibly and in combination – for example, cooperative learning can be effective, with students posing questions, summarizing information, and modeling comprehension strategies for each other. Moreover, students should receive instruction on these strategies that includes direct explanations of the strategy, modeling by the teacher, guided practice using the strategy, and the application of the strategy in reading texts.

Technology

There are several ways in which technology can provide direct instruction in comprehension strategies, including the ability to:

- provide hypertext and hypermedia that includes scaffolding of children's text comprehension to support their learning, such as clarifications, summaries, concept maps, and key questions related to specific parts of the texts;
- provide embedded prompts that ask students to answer questions, add to concept maps or other graphic organizers, or summarize information, and online tools, such as a word processor or a concept mapping tool, to support their work; and
- encourage active reading by providing scaffolding options to read words aloud, provide definitions, explain concepts in texts, and

provide visual aids. These supports help students experience successful reading, provide learning opportunities within the context of meaningful texts, make reading more engaging, and encourage the active use of comprehension strategies.

5. Linking Teaching Recommendations and Potential Uses of Technology

Phonemic Awareness Instruction	
<i>Teaching Recommendation from National Reading Panel Report</i>	<i>Potential Uses of Technology to Support the Teaching Recommendation</i>
Use sound blending and word segmenting activities	Computer-based drill programs using digitized speech
Adjust activities to the child's level of phonemic awareness	Software that can analyze students' responses and individualize the practice set presented to each student
Teach sounds with the corresponding letter(s) of the alphabet	Multimedia capabilities to link sounds and letters
Use small group instruction	Computer-based games incorporating phonemic awareness, such as rhyming games, designed for two or more children to play

Phonics Instruction	
<i>Teaching Recommendation from National Reading Panel Report</i>	<i>Potential Uses of Technology to Support the Teaching Recommendation</i>
Teach direct and systematic letter-sound correspondences	Software to provide direct instruction and drills on letter-sound correspondences, while using systematic approaches to cover all the common correspondences
Adapt phonics instruction to individual needs based upon assessments of student knowledge of letter-sound correspondences	Software that can analyze students' responses and individualize instruction and practice
Combine phonics instruction with phonemic awareness activities, learning to recognize and write the letters, listening to stories and information texts read aloud, students' reading simple text, and writing	Software combining multimedia capabilities to link sounds and letters Multimedia and hypertext to scaffold phonics within context of stories. Talking word processors to link writing and phonics

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Fluency Instruction	
<i>Teaching Recommendation from National Reading Panel Report</i>	<i>Potential Uses of Technology to Support the Teaching Recommendation</i>
Model fluent reading and then have students read the same text aloud	E-books to provide models of fluent reading that are always available and under students' control (for example, to have sentences repeated)
Provide students with opportunities for repeated oral reading with support (for example, help with unknown words) and feedback	Hypertext designed to scaffold early reading to provide support for students, such as pronouncing words and providing definitions
Use audiotapes, tutors, peer guidance, or other means to provide both modeling of fluent reading and feedback	E-books and hypertext to provide modeling of fluent reading, supports for and feedback on students' own reading
Provide students with opportunities to practice reading with a high degree of success (for example, give students books in which they can read 95% of the words)	Hypertext to provide scaffolding enabling students to succeed in reading a larger variety of texts (especially important to enable children reading below their age level to read texts with appropriate and engaging content)

Vocabulary Instruction	
<i>Teaching Recommendation from National Reading Panel Report</i>	<i>Potential Uses of Technology to Support the Teaching Recommendation</i>
Encourage a wide variety of experience with written and spoken language	Technology ranging from reading hypertext to exchanging emails to creating web logs
Teach key vocabulary words directly	Software to provide direct instruction and practice with vocabulary
Teach word learning strategies, such as the use of the dictionary and thesaurus; the use of suffixes, prefixes, and roots; and the use of context clues to figure out the meanings of words	Web-based and CD resources Software that provides direct instruction and practice using word learning strategies
Encourage students to make repeated use of new words in different contexts, including reading, discussions and their own writing	Technology used to provide a variety of opportunities for students to use new vocabulary words in both reading and writing

Text Comprehension Instruction	
<i>Teaching Recommendation from National Reading Panel Report</i>	<i>Potential Uses of Technology to Support the Teaching Recommendation</i>
Help students use specific comprehension strategies, including monitoring comprehension, using graphic and semantic organizers, generating questions and seeking answers in the text, recognizing story structure, and summarizing the text	Software scaffolds to support students decoding, vocabulary, and use of comprehension strategies. Software tools used to create graphic and semantic organizers and summaries of text
Provide direct explanations of the comprehension strategies, modeling, guided practice using the strategy, and the application of the strategy in reading texts	Software to present explanations of strategies, models of their use, guided practice, and opportunities for student to apply them
Teach text comprehension strategies from the early stages of reading, not just after "basics" are mastered	E-books and hypertext capabilities used to scaffold students' phonics, vocabulary, and fluency skills - making it more feasible to teach comprehension skills before all the other components of reading are mastered
Set up cooperative learning opportunities where students pose questions, summarize information, and model comprehension strategies for each other	Software that provides opportunities for collaborative work incorporating comprehension strategies

6. Summary

In this chapter, the issue of technology and teaching children to read was discussed. The five components of effective reading instruction were highlighted, and a framework for technology to support reading instruction was provided.

A link was established between teaching recommendations and the potential use of technology in teaching the five components of an effective reading program.

10

Teaching Writing to Young Learners

1. Introduction

The aim of this chapter is to discuss issues related to teaching writing to young learners. It provides background information on the teaching of writing. Steps of the process of writing are presented. The chapter also includes suggestion for using various types of materials to teach writing. The chapter finishes with presentation of various writing activities that can be used for both younger and older children.

2. Background to the Teaching of Writing

Pinter (2006) proposes, "During the first years of formal schooling native speaker children learn tracing and connecting letters to make words. They learn to use basic punctuation marks and start composing passages such as simple story endings and messages, invitations, or cards, slowly progressing towards creative independent writing and drafting" (p. 74).

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Writing as a skill is usually taught in parallel with reading as children who can read enjoy writing as well. Children pretend that they can write and then gradually begin to write words and short texts, but they lack the skill of spelling. They just incorporate their phonic knowledge from reading and combine it with drawings.

Two separate areas of development must be considered when teaching writing to children (4-7 years old) the fine motor or physical skills necessary to hold a pencil and form letters on paper, and the cognitive skills necessary to formulate ideas and write them on paper. As Linse (2005) demonstrates, "The physical act of forming letters as well as the act of expressing oneself in written form are both challenging for young learners. Therefore as their teacher, you face the considerable task of teaching them how to actually print letters, write words, and capture their ideas to put on paper" (p. 99).

It should be noted that native English-speaking children first learn how to print before they learn how to write cursive letters. Children find it easier to learn printed letters first because such letters are found in their books. As Linse (2005) concludes, "According to many teachers, forming printed letters is easier than forming cursive ones because they have more straight lines and complete circles. Young learners are often taught how to form letters by tracing lines, circles, semi circles, and triangles because this

preparation helps them master the formation of the shapes that are used for letters” (pp. 99-100).

Arab EFL young learners find it difficult to write words or sentences from left to right. Teachers, therefore, should show these learners how to start writing, perhaps by putting an arrow running from left to right at the top of the page.

The matter of whether to allow children to use word processors or computers to produce their written work is under question. Linse (2005) assesses, “The ability to write words down using their own hand is an invaluable skill”. Learning how to form letters is also an important aspect of motor skills development that should not be overlooked in favour of introducing children to word processors at an early stage” (p. 100).

3. Controlled Writing Activities

Writing activities, like oral activities, go from being tightly controlled to being completely free. You will usually do more guided activities with beginners, but you should not exclude very simple free activities. In general, controlled and guided activities are being done to practise the language and concentration is on the language itself. Free activities should allow for self expression at however low a level, and content is what matters most (Scott and Yetreberg, 2001, pp.69-72).

Straight Copying

Copying is a fairly obvious starting point for writing. It is an activity which gives the teacher the chance to reinforce language that has been presented orally or through reading. It is a good idea to ask pupils to read aloud quietly to themselves when they are copying the words because this helps them to see the connection between the written and the spoken word. The sound-symbol combination is quite complicated in English. For children who find even straight copying difficult, you can start them off by tracing words. Even though they may not understand what they are 'writing', they will still end up with a piece of written work, and this in itself will give valuable encouragement and satisfaction.

Delayed Copying

You can do 'delayed' copying, which is fun to do in class, for training short term visual memory. Write a short, familiar sentence on the board, give the pupils a few seconds to look at it, and then rub it out and see if the pupils can write it down. Please note that this type of activity should not be used as a test.

Copying Book

It is useful for pupils to have a copying book when they can copy new vocabulary, a little dialogue, something you want them to remember or whatever. Most pupils will keep to what you ask them

to copy, but they should be free to copy things from the textbook, the notice board and from other pupils. Some pupils will copy whole stories. If they have the time to do it, let them.

Dictation

Dictation is a very safe type of exercise if you can keep the language elementary and simple, and because you, the teacher, are providing the actual language as well as the context. For young learners, dictations should

- be short.
- be made up of sentences which can be said in one breath.
- have a purpose, and be connected to work which has gone before or comes after.
- be read or said at normal speed.

Here is a short, simple dictation which acts as a message to the class: 'Maria has a baker's hat. She's going to bring it to class tomorrow. We're going to have a baker's shop.'

4. Guided Written Activities

Fill-in exercises

Fill-in exercises are useful activities, especially at the beginner stages. They do not require much active production of language, since most of the language is given, but they do require

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understanding. With children who have progressed to level two, they can be used to focus on specific language items, like prepositions or question forms. Try to avoid exercises which have no meaning at all – exercises which give you sentences like ‘The ox is on the bed’.

Dictation

You might like to try dictating only half a sentence, and asking pupils to complete it in their own way. For example,

I like ...

I don't like ...

I hate ...

I love ...

You can either ask pupils to complete each sentence before you read the beginning of the next sentence, which encourages quick writing, or you can give them time to do the completion afterwards. This type of exercise is a good starting point for discussion in the pre-writing stage of free writing.

Letters/ cards/ invitations

Letter writing seems to be a popular language class activity, and it is indeed a useful way of getting pupils to write short meaningful pieces of writing. Ideally, letters are written to be sent, but you can have pupils writing to each other and ‘sending’ their letters via the

classroom postman. Here is a very simple guided exercise which can be used quite early on:

Dear

Are you free on? going to the

Would you like to come with

Love

And the reply:

Dear

I'd love to go to the with on

Thanks.

Love

or

Dear.....

I'm sorry I can't go to the with on

Thanks anyway.

Love

(For guided writing activities, see Scott and Yeterbeg, pp. 72-74)

5. Free Writing Activities

Above we looked at examples of activities designed to develop the pupils' writing, with most of the language being provided for them. Pupils then need to be able to try out their language in a freer way. In free activities the language is the pupils' own language, no

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matter what their level is. The teacher should be the initiator and helper, and, of course, is responsible for seeing that the task can be done by the pupils at that level. The more language the children have, the easier it is to work on free writing activities.

All pupils need to spend time on pre-writing work – warm-up activities which are designed to give them language, ideas and encouragement before they settle down to the writing itself.

Pre-Writing Activities

A short simple conversation about the subject can be enough to get ideas going and collect thoughts. With the five to seven year olds, you might start them off by simply asking a question: 'What did you do last night?' and writing some of the answers on the board: 'watched TV, played football, had supper, read a story', etc. (For controlled, guided and free writing see, Scott and Ytreberg, 2001, pp. 69-79).

Topic Vocabulary

Vocabulary can also be built up by collecting related words. See how many animal words you can get on the blackboard, for example. Say to pupils: 'Tell me two animals you like. Tell me two animals you don't like. What's the smallest animal you've seen? What's the biggest animal you've seen? Tell me two animals which we don't have in this country.' Of course, pupils will not know the names for

all the animals. Use picture dictionaries as much as you can, but have your own dictionary too – you won't always know the words either. Pupils do not have to remember all these words – you are only collecting words to help them write their story.

Dialogues

The dialogues the children write function as basic communication at all levels if they are spoken before they are written and used as reading texts after they have been written. The dialogues can be guided, following a very strict pattern, or they can be completely free. They can be very short and to the point, or they can be long and complicated. Best of all, perhaps, they can be about any topic.

Letters

A real letter should be written to someone. The first free letters could be little notes to other pupils. They can also be written to the teacher, and these letters should be answered without any comments on the language. Some teachers like to have this type of correspondence with their pupils regularly, just to see how they are getting on. For pupils who are beyond the beginner level, this teacher-pupil correspondence, which is private, may take the form of a diary instead of a series of letters.

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When the pupils can write longer letters, it is a great advantage if you can establish contact with an English-speaking class or a class in another country where they are also learning English as a foreign language. Letters to imaginary people are not nearly as interesting or as much fun as letters to real pen-friends. Class letters, cassettes and individual letters are all possible if you have contact of this kind.

Stories

Writing group stories is a good idea since the actual writing can be shared, and re-writing is not such a burden. Make sure that pupils do lots of pre-writing activities so that they have something to write about and the words to express what they want to say. Give them as much help as possible as they go along. Remember that most pieces of writing are written to be read by others, so the final version should be on a reading card, in the form of a pupil-made booklet, on a teacher-typed card, or simply on a piece of paper which can be put on the wall of the classroom.

Summary of Dos and Don'ts on Free Writing

Do

- concentrate first on content.
- spend a lot of time on pre-writing work.
- make sure that it springs naturally from other language work.

- try to make sense of whatever the pupils have written and say something positive about it.
- encourage, but don't insist on, re-writing.
- display the material whenever possible.
- keep all the pupils' writings.

Don't

- announce the subject out of the blue and expect pupils to be able to write about it.
- see an exercise as homework without any preparation.
- correct all the mistakes you can find.
- set work which is beyond the pupils' language capability. (For free writing activities, see Scott & Ytreberg, 2001, p. 74-82.)

6. The Writing Process

Writing is composed of process and product (Sokolik, 2003). As a process, writing is the act of gathering ideas. This concept of the process of writing is very useful to young writers (Olson, 2003). It enables the learner to know that writing is done in steps. "Young learners need to know that a final piece of writing – or the product – such as a book, has grown out of many steps which make up the process." (Linse, 2005, p. 98).

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As emphasis on fluency is one of the main features of teaching English as a foreign language, process writing is especially important for EFL young learners. Young learners need to speak and write fluently (Linse, 2005; Cameron, 2001).

The process writing approach involves certain steps necessary to produce a final piece of writing. It begins with generating and collecting ideas about a chosen topic culminating with writing the final version or the product to be formally published and shared with others. In the final stage (the product) the writer is supposed to adhere to the conventions of spelling and grammar.

Linse (2005) indicates, "Sometimes parents and occasionally even young learners themselves will want to get straight to the product and minimize the process" (p. 101). Linse follows the following steps when she teaches children how to use a process approach to writing:

Pre-write

In this important first step, children are given an opportunity to prepare to write and to collect their thoughts and ideas. If done properly, it can ease children into writing without any hesitation or worry.

Write

Children write down all of their ideas. They do not worry about form or correctness or even the order. The objective is to get the ideas on paper as quickly as possible.

Revise

The initial piece of writing is examined and re-worked so that the ideas are logical and flow together.

Edit

Learners (with the help of their teachers, caregivers, or classmates) proof read their work to make sure that there are not any content errors or grammatical or spelling errors.

Publish

The writing piece is rewritten in a published or presentable form, in a student-made book, on special paper, and/ or on a computer so that it can be displayed or shared. (p. 102).

Pre-Writing

A prewriting activity could be as simple as a discussion between the teacher and the learners to invoke ideas.

Writing

This step of writing is to get thoughts and ideas of the pre-writing stage on paper. Children, at this point in the writing process

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need to know that they can write down any idea about the chosen topic. Then ideas can be re arranged later. Young learners need to be reminded not to write something related to the topic.

In order to eliminate the irrelevant things, the chosen topic should be of interest to them so that they keep writing on the same topic. Linse (2005) gives a practical note, “Young learners need to have enough blank paper and pencils or markers at their disposal. To facilitate rearranging information, young learners may want to write each sentence on a different index card so that they can put their sentences in different order, without having to copy everything over. Nothing should slow down the child’s process and momentum” (p. 107).

Revising

Children think that once words are written on paper they are final. They look at the teacher’s role as a copy editor of spelling and grammar. This image should be changed. As a teacher you should act as a consultant for your learners to help them how to make their writings comprehensible and interesting by commenting on content ideas, or organization not on grammatical or spelling errors.

In addition to the teacher’s feedback, children need to do revision on their own, and to get feedback from their classmates, or caregivers. The teacher’s feedback “should both compliment and provide suggestions where the student can make improvements”

(Linse, 2005, p. 108). To illustrate her suggestion, Linse gives the following example:

The prompt or suggestion for writing is *Which item on your box makes you smile? Why?* The sample piece of writing is from a six-year-old who has been studying English for two years.

The puppy makes me smile. Puppies are nice.

T: Your first sentence tells the reader one of the reasons why you like puppies. It is a good beginning. Why else do you like puppies?

S: Well. Um. They're cute.

T: Do you know any puppies?

S: Yeah.

T: Can you tell me anything else about the puppy that you know?

S: Well. Um. My puppy is happy when I come home.

T: What is your puppy's name?

S: Argos.

T: You have a really good beginning. Why don't you write about Argos and how Argos feels when you come home?

S: OK.

Editing

Children consider editing a painful thing which might demotivate them to write. However, children need to know "how to

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write using standard conventions of spelling, grammar and punctuation” (Linse, 2005, p. 109). You can use a red pen to correct children mistakes, or to direct their attention to the correct punctuation marks. “Checklists which tell students what to look for in their own writing as well as in the work of their peers can also be very useful. For instance, you can have a checklist that reminds students to make sure that all of the names of people have been capitalized” (Linse, 2005, p. 109).

Publishing

This is the final stage of the writing process where a piece of writing takes the final shape to be shared with others. Publishing can motivate children to produce more of their writing. Young learners might write diaries about their experiences at school. Teachers should encourage children to jot their ideas down on paper.

7. Techniques and Activities

The process approach to writing can be used with young learners. The following techniques and activities are helpful for implementing the writing process in the classroom.

Writing Models

Writers read various types of writing such as fiction and non-fiction. “Thus, you want to provide reading material that will model the type of writing your learners will produce” (Linse, 2005, p. 110).

By exposing children to a variety of texts, the teacher can help children to become better writers. The following example of student-made reports can serve as a good model for young writers:

My favorite animal is the crocodile.
It has got small eyes.
It has got a long tail.
It has got a big mouth.
It has got sharp teeth.
It has got short legs.
It can swim very well (Linse, 2005, p. 111).

This example is designed for six-or seven-year- old children. This model can encourage children to write about their favorite animals. Lense (2005) illustrates, "Favorite stories can be used as a model. Children can be eased into writing their own stories by reading a story and then writing the prequel or sequel. For example, you could ask your learners to write a sequel to 'Goldilocks and the three Bears'." (p.111).

Goldilocks and the Three Bears.

Once upon a time, there were three bears. There was Mama Bear. There was Papa Bear. There was Baby Bear. They all lived in

a house in the woods. One day, Mama Bear made some porridge. Mama Bear put the porridge on the table for the three bears.

The three bears wanted the porridge to cool off. The three bears went for a walk. While they were gone, Goldilocks walked by the bears' house. Goldilocks looked into the window. Goldilocks opened the door. She walked inside. She saw the porridge on the table.

Goldilocks ate some of Papa Bear's porridge. She said, "This porridge is too hot." She ate some of Mama Bear's porridge. She said, "This porridge is too cold." She ate some of Baby Bear's porridge. She said, "This porridge is just right." And she ate it all up.

Next, Goldilocks went into the living room. She sat in Papa Bear's chair. She said, "This chair is too hard." Next, she sat in Mama Bear's chair. She said, "This chair is too soft." Next, she sat in Baby Bear's chair. She said, "This chair is just right." She sat in Baby Bear's chair and it broke.

Next, Goldilocks went into the bedroom. She lay down in Papa Bear's bed. She said, "This bed is too hard." Next, she lay down in Mama Bear's bed. She said, "This bed is too soft." Next, she lay down in Baby Bear's bed. She said, "This bed is just right." She lay down in Baby Bear's bed and fell asleep.

The three bears came home. Papa Bear said, "Someone ate my porridge." Mama Bear said, "Someone ate my porridge." Baby Bear said, "Someone ate my porridge all up." The three bears went into

the living room. Papa Bear said, "Someone sat in my chair." Mama Bear said, "Someone sat in my chair." Baby Bear said, "Someone sat in my chair and broke it."

The three bears went into the bedroom. Papa Bear said, "Someone lay down on my bed." Mama Bear said, "Someone lay down on my bed." Baby Bear said, "Someone lay down on my bed and here she is."

Goldilocks got up and ran away (Linse,2005,p.35).

"After reading or re-reading the original story, you could have a prewriting discussion where you prompt your learners with questions such as, *what do you think the three bears should do to Goldilocks? Do you think that they should talk to Goldilocks' parents? Why or why not? What do you think her parents should do to her?* You then ask your students to write their sequel" (Linse, 2005, p. 111).

Group Writing

Children can work collaboratively on a writing project. The teacher might begin group writing by doing a language experience approach story which can be used to teach both reading and writing. For example, after a visit to a local bakery, students may say and the teacher may write:

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We went to the bakery.

We saw really-really big ovens.

We had some bread.

It tasted really good.

We put butter on it.

It was fun. (Linse, 2005, p. 85).

Word Walls

Word Walls are lists of words that the children have encountered in their reading and that can be used in their writing. These lists should be posted on the walls of your classroom -- hence their name. Learners can refer to a Word Wall during various stages of the writing process. Different Word Walls can have different focuses. For instance, one Word Wall could include high-frequency words that learners often see in their reading. The words can be arranged alphabetically. Other Word Walls can be arranged topically. If you arrange a Word Wall according to different topics or subjects, you might want to color code them (Linse, 2005, p. 114).

8. Writing in the Classroom

English for starters series include a writing component. For young learners under the age of five, emphasis is placed on the formation of letters. For older learners, writing activities are related to the content.

Writing activities for young learners can also be about the content. The following example is designed for eight-or nine-year-old children. The students have been studying about the way that the Earth changes with events such as earthquakes and volcanoes.

Earth changes

Write a story about a change on Earth you read about.

Be sure to answer these questions:

- *Is it a fast change or a slow change?*
- *How does the change happen?*
- *Make a cover for your story.*
- *Give your story a title.* (Linse, 2005, p. 116).

Let's look at how a teacher could use the above example in every step of the writing process. As a prewriting activity, children can brainstorm all of the different ways that the earth can change. As

a writing activity, they can select one topic and answer the questions on the page. As a revision activity, they can participate in a writing conference with their teacher or classmate. As an editing activity, they can refer to word wall for science words related to the topic. As a publishing activity, they can make little books about different natural events such as volcanoes and earthquakes (Linse, 2005, p.116).

9. Writing Activities with Younger Children

Children need to practise the mechanical basics of writing starting with copying activities in which children select words to copy from a list. Pinter (2006) presents other examples of copying which may include copying only those words which mean some kind of food, and copying only those names of animals that appeared in the story.

Copying is also done as follow up to an oral activity; for example, the teacher might get the children to brainstorm lists of words or phrases to write on the blackboard. Later the teacher can ask the class to copy these words into their exercise books.

Besides these creative copying exercises, other activities involve word level writing such as creating 'word snakes' for each other, working out words where the letters have been mixed up or written backwards, creating and solving simple (four- to five- word) puzzles.

They can create their own crossword puzzles which can be given to classmates to solve. (See Pinter, 2006, p. 76.)

Children's activity book contains grammatical and vocabulary exercises such as gap-filling exercises or matching two pictures with words or sentences. These sorts of exercises give children the opportunity to use familiar language.

Guided writing activities can be used to teach older children writing skills. Children are required to complete a framework or a model with relevant personal details. These models are often in the form of cards, invitations, letters, stories or posters. "Guided writing activities can be motivating because they allow children to write longer pieces of text by substituting their personally relevant messages into a given frame" (Pinter, 2006, p. 77).

10. Writing Activities with Older Children

Besides practising writing at the word or sentence level, older children may also be ready for freer writing. These might include filling in captions in speech bubbles in a group cartoon story, or writing instructions or simple diaries, write children's own stories, or produce their class newspaper.

The internet provides an effective way of encouraging children to communicate with other children in another country through writing e-mails to one another. The Internet offers a good source of

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information that learners can use. By visiting English websites, children can practise and enjoy writing. "Writing lists of new words, dialogues, or short paragraphs in the exercise book is a way of keeping a record of what has been learnt" (Pinter, 2006, p. 77). With the encouragement of their teacher, children can be asked to evaluate their learning in a personal diary or journal. "After mastering some useful phrases (such as 'I enjoyed', 'learnt a lot from', 'did not like', or 'next I would like to learn'), children can begin to reflect on their learning in the second language" (Pinter, 2006, p. 77).

Children homework often involves doing exercises from the activity book. Teachers should check or discuss children homework for the positive role it plays in learning. During the process of writing, the focus should be placed on both the message and grammatical correctness. Children can cooperate to scaffold each other in writing. "Research shows that learners who work together in pairs on tasks that ask them to write texts such as stories or letters do much better together than they could have done on their own" (Pinter, 2006, p. 79). This sort of joint work on a piece of writing is likely to sustain the interest and motivation of children.

11. Summary

Writing can be a useful skill in the foreign language classroom for young learners, especially when children are familiar with the English writing system. Teachers' awareness of how children write in their first language enables them to take decisions about when and how to introduce writing for their young learners.

Writing as a process and a product were discussed in this chapter. Activities for teaching and modeling writing were also provided.



11

Teaching Vocabulary to Young Learners

I. Introduction

The aim of this chapter is to look at teaching the language system; i.e. vocabulary and grammar to young learners. The chapter begins with an explanation of the term vocabulary and introduces background information about vocabulary and grammar. It illustrates the interdependence between vocabulary and grammar, and provides information about children's capacity of recognizing words and the learning of grammar.

The chapter also presents principles of teaching vocabulary. Indirect and direct vocabulary learning and questions about vocabulary instructions are proposed. A range of techniques to teach vocabulary to young learners are then presented. Finally, vocabulary and grammar learning activities for both younger and older learning are suggested.

2. Background to the Teaching of Vocabulary

... Vocabulary refers to the words we must know to communicate...
effectively. In general, it can be described as oral vocabulary or reading vocabulary. Oral vocabulary refers to words that we use in speaking or recognize in listening. Reading vocabulary refers to words we recognize or use in print.

Vocabulary plays an important part in learning to read. As beginning readers, children use the words they have heard to make sense of the words they see in print. Consider, for example, what happens when a beginning reader comes to the word **dig** in a book. As she begins to figure out the sounds represented by the letters **d**, **i**, **g**, the reader recognizes that the sounds make up a very familiar word that she has heard and said many times. Beginning readers have a much more difficult time reading words that are not already part of their oral vocabulary.

Vocabulary is also very important to reading comprehension. Readers cannot understand what they are reading without knowing what most of the words mean. As children learn to read more advanced texts, they must learn the meaning of new words that are not part of their oral vocabulary.

Types of Vocabulary

Researchers often refer to four types of vocabulary:

- **listening vocabulary** – the words we need to know to understand what we hear.
- **speaking vocabulary** – the words we use when we speak.
- **reading vocabulary** – the words we need to know to understand what we read.
- **writing vocabulary** – the words we use in writing. (See Armbruster et al, 2001, p.29)

Learning vocabulary enhances children's language development. Linse (2005) states, "A variety of studies have proven that appropriate vocabulary instructions benefit language students, especially school-age learners" (p. 122). It is important, therefore, to give students opportunities to use vocabulary through formal or informal instructions that engage students' cognitive skills (McKeown and Beck, 2003). The teacher should also train students how to use "thinking skills such as analyzing which of two words would be a better choice in a sentence. An example would be having a child choose between the words *enormous* and *giant* in a sentence about sandwiches. You also want to give learners opportunities to use the words by playing games or responding to complex questions that include the words" (Linse, 2005, p. 122).

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The teacher should give children different learning opportunities to develop their language ability by improving their understanding of how words are used in the context of reading and writing (Linse, 2005; Brand 2004). Children can easily learn useful words related to their daily life which are of high frequency and of interest to them. Teachers should teach children useful words and employ certain strategies to help children infer the meanings of unfamiliar words on their own (Nation, 2003).

Teaching vocabulary overlaps with ideas mentioned in previous chapters. For example, the activities designed for teaching listening in chapter 4 can also be used to teach new vocabulary as listening for songs, rhymes, or stories involves listening to new vocabulary. Similarly, examples of reading and writing activities such as matching words with pictures can also be used to practise vocabulary. Thus, the teaching of vocabulary cannot be isolated from the teaching of other skills.

Linse (2005) maintains,

Vocabulary should be integrated into teaching the four skills: listening, speaking, reading, and writing. For example, you might include vocabulary items as part of a total physical response to listening activity. As another vocabulary activity, you could introduce students to

specific lexical items that they would encounter as part of their reading lesson. To help students add words to their written vocabulary, you could encourage them to refer to word wall when they are producing different pieces of written text (Lin, 2006, p. 122).

3. Vocabulary and Grammar

Speakers and writers make use of a large number of vocabulary items and grammatical structures to produce language. To be able to use this efficiently, language learners need to understand the complex interaction between vocabulary and grammar; they need to combine words with structures.

It should be noted that native speakers combine words together quickly in chunks. They retrieve phrases such as 'what have you been up to?' in phrases rather than taking each word in isolation. They also use word collocations; i.e. how words go together 'tall trees' rather than 'high trees', or 'take' medicine rather than 'drink' or 'eat'. Pinter (2006) contends:

Vocabulary and grammar are stored together in the mental lexicon in typical combinations rather than in isolation. The implication of this for teaching is that vocabulary and grammar should be taught together. When teaching

vocabulary, teachers may need to consider grammatical choices and environments for the words and when teaching grammar, they may need to consider meaningful contexts and typical collocations (p. 83-4).

Learning new words involves some grammatical information about it. Pinter (2006) maintains that when we learn the verb 'write', for example, we have to learn other related words such as 'a writer', 'a piece of writing', the past tense form 'wrote' and the past participle form 'written'.

"Younger children, in particular, are not ready for or interested in thinking about the language system or manipulating the language so as to separate lexical items out of structures. They are interested in the meaning and function of new language more holistically, in order to play a game, sing a song, or act out a story" (Pinter, 2006, p. 84). As children grow older, they become more aware of the language system and the analysis of grammar and lexis. Children, at a more advanced level, will be able to spell a certain word correctly. They also know more about its grammatical information: e.g. countable, uncountable noun, a verb an adverb... etc. In this way we move from the level of word to the areas of grammar.

4. Learning Grammar

Teaching grammar in isolation can be a boring activity. Grammar needs to be noticed and learnt from a meaningful context embedded in appropriate lexis. In this way, children become aware of the relationship between form and function. A certain word may express different functions and meaning. For example, 'Can I have a piece of cake, mummy?' *Can* functions as a modal auxiliary of permission, while the sentence 'Mummy, I can count to 100 in English', *can* is used to express ability (Pinter 2006, p. 85).

It is natural for children to make mistakes on their way of acquiring grammatical forms. They learn to use correct forms with continued practice and attention to form. Regardless of their first mother tongue language, all children from different backgrounds make similar grammatical mistakes; this means that the mother tongue is not the only source of errors in second or foreign language learning. The teacher should provide lots of meaningful practice and guidance in teaching grammatical forms.

5. Principles for Teaching Vocabulary

The following principles for teaching vocabulary to young learners are helpful for their oral and written English language skills development in general and for vocabulary development in particular for very young learners who have not yet gained literacy

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skills in their native language, the focus should be on oral-language vocabulary development.

Linse (2005) lists the following principles:

1.Emphasize both direct and indirect teaching

Direct and indirect vocabulary instruction should be included as part of a vocabulary development program (Carlo, et al., 2004).

Direct instruction refers to teaching the words and their meanings.

An example of direct instruction would be pre-teaching vocabulary items students will encounter in a reading selection.

Indirect instruction refers to helping children learn appropriate strategies so

they can figure out the meaning of words on their own. For example,

teaching the prefixes *uni*, *bi*, and *tri* to students and then having them point to pictures of a unicycle, bicycle, and tricycle.

2.Teach vocabulary words before a new activity

When vocabulary words are taught before a new activity, students benefit in two ways. First, they are better able to

comprehend the activity. Second, teaching vocabulary words in

advance makes it more likely that students will actually acquire the target vocabulary words (National Institute of Child Health and

Human Development, 2000). This principle holds true for stories (oral and written), songs, and many other language-rich activities.

3. Teach how to use context clues appropriately

Students can benefit from learning how to use **context clues** and guessing the meaning from the **context** (Decarrico, 2001). This is a strategy that learners can use when they encounter unfamiliar words. Conversely, McKown and Beck (2003) point out that in addition to teaching how to use context clues, students also need to be taught that context clues do *not* always help readers to understand the meanings of unfamiliar words. Children need to be taught that there are times, especially when reading, when they will *not* be able to figure out the meaning from context clues.

4. Present multiple exposures to new vocabulary items

Young learners make educational gains when they are exposed to vocabulary items repeatedly in rich contexts (National Institute of Child Health and Human Development, 2000). In other words, you shouldn't expect that a vocabulary word taught on Monday will be remembered on Wednesday. As part of young teaching repertoire, remember that a new word should reappear many times and in different situations for the next several weeks of instruction.

5. Give opportunities for deep processing of vocabulary items

Deep processing means working with information at a high cognitive and/or personal level. Deep processing makes it more likely that information will be remembered. Part of deep processing

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is having students establish connections between new words and their prior knowledge. Simply memorizing lists of words and their meanings is not adequate for students to integrate the vocabulary words into their personal vocabularies.

Deep processing is a very important component of vocabulary acquisition and development. It is also closely related to reading and reading comprehension (Blachowicz and Fisher, 2000) and to overall language development. Deep processing refers to using words in contexts which are especially meaningful to the learners. This can involve grouping words according to different characteristics or attributes. It can also involve relating the words to your learners' own lives. Personalizing vocabulary lessons will greatly help students' deep processing. For example, if you teach the above lessons on rooms in a house, you may want to end the unit by having students talk about or write sentences about the rooms in their houses.

6. Teach students to use dictionaries

The use of dictionaries as a tool for EFL and ESL instruction has come back into style (Thornbury, 2002). Young learners can benefit from using dictionaries. Very young children, under the age of six, can use a picture dictionary where words are grouped into different categories. Children who are at the beginning stages of language and

literacy development can also use picture dictionaries as a tool to help them increase both their vocabulary knowledge and their use of context clues. For example, if children are learning about grapefruit, they can be guided to a picture dictionary page topically arranged to include fruit. They will discover the grapefruit as being a fruit.

Learners with English-language literacy skills can also use dictionaries where the words are placed in alphabetical order. As a teacher, it is important to teach children how to use different dictionaries. For example, most students need to be told that the first meaning given in a dictionary is the most common. In addition, students who use electronic dictionaries need to be cautioned regarding their limitations.

7. Have students keep vocabulary notebooks

Vocabulary notebooks provide students with opportunities to develop a variety of vocabulary acquisition strategies and also help students have more control over their learning (Fowles, 2002, for details see Linse, 2005, pp. 123-127).

6. Vocabulary Instruction: What does scientifically based research tell us about vocabulary instruction?

The scientific research on vocabulary instruction reveals that (1) most vocabulary is learned indirectly and (2) some vocabulary must be taught directly. The following conclusions about indirect

Vocabulary learning and direct vocabulary instruction are of particular interest and value to classroom teachers:

Children learn the meanings of most words indirectly, through everyday experiences with oral and written language.

Children learn word meanings indirectly in three ways:

- ***They engage daily in oral language.*** Young children learn word meanings through conversations with other people, especially adults. As they engage in these conversations, children often hear adults repeat words several times. They also may hear adults use new and interesting words. The more oral language experiences children have, the more word meanings they learn.
- ***They listen to adults read to them.*** Children learn word meanings from listening to adults read to them. Reading aloud is particularly helpful when the reader pauses during reading to define an unfamiliar word and, after reading, engages the child in a conversation about the book. Conversations about books help children to learn new words and concepts and to relate them to their prior knowledge and experience.
- ***They read extensively on their own.*** Children learn many new words by reading extensively on their own. The more children read on their own, the more words they encounter and the more word meanings they learn.

Indirect Vocabulary Learning

Students learn vocabulary indirectly when they hear and see words used in many different contexts – for example, through conversations with adults, through being read to, and through reading extensively on their own.

Direct Vocabulary Learning

Specific Word Instruction

Word Learning Instruction

Students learn vocabulary directly when they are explicitly taught both individual words and word-learning strategies. Direct vocabulary instruction aids reading comprehension.

Although a great deal of vocabulary is learned indirectly, some vocabulary should be taught directly.

Direct instruction helps students learn difficult words, such as words that represent complex concepts that are not part of the students' everyday experiences. Direct instruction of vocabulary relevant to a given text leads to better reading comprehension.

Direct instruction includes:

- providing students with specific word instruction; and
- teaching students word-learning strategies.

Specific word instruction

Specific word instruction, or teaching individual words, can deepen students' knowledge of word meanings. In-depth knowledge of word meanings can help students understand what they are hearing or reading. It also can help them use words accurately in speaking and writing.

In particular:

- ***Teaching specific words before reading helps both vocabulary learning and reading comprehension.*** Before students read a text, it is helpful to teach them specific words they will see in the text. Teaching important vocabulary before reading can help students both learn new words and comprehend the text.
- ***Extended instruction that promotes active engagement with vocabulary improves word learning.*** Children learn words best when they are provided with instruction over an extended period of time and when that instruction has them work actively with the words. The more students use new words and the more they use them in different contexts, the more likely they are to learn the words.
- ***Repeated exposure to vocabulary in many contexts aids word learning.*** Students learn new words better when they encounter them often and in various contexts. The more children see, hear,

and work with specific words, the better they seem to learn them. When teachers provide extended instruction that promotes active engagement, they give students repeated exposure to new words. When the students read those same words in their texts, they increase their exposure to the new words.

Word-learning strategies

Of course, it is not possible for teachers to provide specific instruction for all the words their students do not know. Therefore, students also need to be able to determine the meaning of words that are new to them but not taught directly to them. They need to develop effective word-learning strategies, such as:

- how to use dictionaries and other reference aids to learn word meanings and to deepen knowledge of word meanings;
- how to use information about word parts to figure out the meanings of words in text; and
- how to use context clues to determine word meanings.

Using dictionaries and other reference aids. Students must learn how to use dictionaries, glossaries, and thesauruses to help broaden and deepen their knowledge of words, even though these resources can be difficult to use. The most helpful dictionaries include sentences providing clear examples of word meanings in context.

Using word parts.

Knowing some common prefixes and suffixes (affixes), base words, and root words can help students learn the meanings of many new words. For example, if students learn just the four most common prefixes in English (**un-**, **re-**, **in-**, **dis-**), they will have important clues about the meaning of about two thirds of all English words that have prefixes. Prefixes are relatively easy to learn because they have clear meanings (for example, **un-** means "not" and **re-** means "again"); they are usually spelled the same way from word to word; and, of course, they always occur at the beginnings of words.

Learning suffixes can be more challenging than learning prefixes. This is because some suffixes have more abstract meanings than do prefixes. For example, learning that the suffix **-ness** means "the state or quality of" might not help students figure out the meaning of **kindness**. Other suffixes, however, are more helpful, for example, **-less**, which means "without" (**hopeless**, **thoughtless**); and **-full**, which means "full of" (**hopeful**, **thoughtful**).

Word Parts

Word parts

Word parts include affixes (prefixes and suffixes), base words, and word roots.

*Affixes are word parts that are “fixed to” either the beginnings of words (prefixes) or the ending of words (suffixes). The word **disrespectful** has two affixes, a prefix (**dis-**) and a suffix (**-ful**).*

Base words are words from which many other words are formed.

*For example, many words can be formed from the base word **migrate**: **migration, migrant, immigration, immigrant, migrating, migratory**.*

Word roots are the words from other language that are the origin of many English words. About 60% of all English words have Latin or Greek origins.

Examples of Classroom Instructions

Using word parts

- *A second-grade teacher wants to teach her students how to use the base word **play** as a way to help them think about the meanings of new words they will encounter in reading. To begin, she has students brainstorm all the words or phrases they can think of that are related to **play**. The teacher records their suggestions: **player, playful, playpen, ballplayer, and playing field**. Then she has the class discuss the meaning of each of their proposed words and how it relates to **play**.*

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- *A third-grade teacher identifies the base word **note**. He then sets up a “word wall,” and writes the word **note** at the top of the wall. As his students read, the teacher has them look for words that are related to **note** and add them to the wall. Throughout their reading, they gradually add to the wall the words: **notebook**, **notation**, **noteworthy**, and **notable**.*

Using context clues

Context clues are hints about the meaning of an unknown word that are provided in the words, phrases, and sentences that surround the word. Context clues include definitions, restatements, examples, or descriptions. Because students learn most word meanings indirectly, or from context, it is important that they learn to use context clues effectively.

7. Questions you may have about vocabulary instruction

How can I help my students learn words indirectly?

You can encourage indirect learning of vocabulary in two main ways. First, read aloud to your students. In middle- and high-grade you teach. Students of all ages can learn words by reading texts of various kinds read to them. Reading aloud works best when you discuss the selection before, during, and after you read. Talk with

students about new words, facts and concepts and help them relate the words to their prior knowledge and experiences.

The second way to promote indirect learning of vocabulary is to encourage students to read extensively on their own. Rather than allocating instructional time for independent reading in the classroom, however, encourage your students to read more outside of school. Of course, your students can read on their own during independent work time in the classroom – for example, while you teach another small group or after students have completed one activity and are waiting for a new activity to begin.

What words should I teach?

You won't be able to directly teach your students all the words in a text that they might not already know. In fact, there are several reasons why you **should not** directly teach all unknown words.

- The text may have a great many words that are unknown to students – too many for direct instruction.
- Direct vocabulary instruction can take a lot of class time – time that you might better spend having your students read.
- Your students can understand most texts without knowing the meaning of every word in the text.
- Your students need opportunities to use word-learning strategies to learn on their own the meanings of unknown words.

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You need to choose the words you teach carefully. Focus on teaching three types of words:

- **Important words.** When you teach words before students read a text, directly teach those words that are important for understanding a concept or the text. Your students might not know several other words in the selection, but you will not have time to teach them all. Of course, you should prepare your students to use word learning strategies to figure out the meanings of other words in the text.

- **Useful words.** Teach words that students are likely to see and use again and again. For example, it is probably more useful for students to learn the word **fragment** than the word **fractal**; likewise, the word **revolve** is more useful than the word **gyrate**.

- **Difficult words.** Provide some instruction for words that are particularly difficult for your students.

Words with multiple meanings are particularly challenging for students. Students may have a hard time understanding that words with the same spelling and/or pronunciation can have different meanings, depending on their context. Looking up words with multiple meanings in the dictionary can cause confusion for students. They see a number of different definitions listed, and they often have a difficult time deciding which definition fits the context.

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You will have to help students determine which definition they should choose.

Multiple-meaning words that can be difficult for students	
<i>Words that are spelled the same but are pronounced differently</i>	<i>Sow</i> (a female pig); <i>sow</i> (to plant seeds) <i>Bow</i> (a knot with loops); <i>bow</i> (the front of a ship)
<i>Words that are spelled and pronounced the same, but have different meanings</i>	<i>mail</i> (letters, cards, and packages); <i>mail</i> (a type of armor) <i>ray</i> (a narrow beam of light); <i>ray</i> (a type of fish); <i>ray</i> (part of a line)

How well do my students need to “know” vocabulary words?

Students do not either know or not know words. Rather, they know words to varying degrees. They may never have seen or heard a word before. They may have heard or seen it, but have only a vague idea of what it means. Or they may be very familiar with the meaning of a word and be able to use it accurately in their own speech and writing. These three levels of word knowledge are called ***unknown, acquainted, and established.***

As they read, students can usually get by with some words at the unknown or acquainted levels. If students are to understand the text fully, however, they need to have an established level of knowledge for most of the words that they read.

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Level of word knowledge	Definition
<i>Unknown</i>	<i>The word is completely unfamiliar and its meaning is unknown.</i>
<i>Acquainted</i>	<i>The word is somewhat familiar; the student has some idea of its basic meaning.</i>
<i>Established</i>	<i>The word is very familiar, the student can immediately recognize its meaning and use the word correctly.</i>

What else can I do to help my students develop vocabulary?

- Another way you can help your students develop vocabulary is to foster word consciousness – an awareness of and interest in words, their meanings, and their power. Word-conscious students know many words and use them well. They enjoy words and are eager to learn new words – and they know how to learn them.
- You can help your students develop word consciousness in several ways. Call their attention to the way authors choose words to convey particular meanings. Encourage students to play with words by engaging in word play, such as puns or palindromes. Help them research a word's origin or history. You can also encourage them to search for examples of a word's usage in their everyday lives.

In brief, vocabulary refers to the words we must know to communicate effectively. Oral vocabulary refers to words that we use in speaking or recognize in listening. Reading vocabulary refers to words we recognize or use in print.

Vocabulary is important because beginning readers use their oral vocabulary to make sense of the words they see in print. Readers must know what most of the words mean before they can understand what they are reading.

Vocabulary can be developed indirectly, when students engage daily in oral language, listen to adults read to them, and read extensively on their own. Vocabulary can also be developed directly, when students are explicitly taught both individual words and word-learning strategies. (For details, see Armbruster et al., 2001, pp. 29-39.)

8. Techniques and Activities

Approaches and activities can be used to teach vocabulary items that are part of the curriculum and items that young children find meaningful. (See Linse, 2005, pp. 128-131.)

Personalization

Vocabulary items can be connected to children's lives through personalization. This can be done through teacher's questions, which allow children to relate the new items to their own experience. The questions should be carefully phrased to develop children cognitive

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skills. Linse (2005) gives the following examples of these well-phrased questions

What is your favorite way to move – *jump, hop, skip*, etc?

What is the most important piece of *furniture* in your house?

When you are *hungry*, what do you want to eat?

What makes you feel *happy*?(p.128).

Notice that the target vocabulary item is written in italics. Such questions help children to remember the words and to use them in their speech and writing as they are related to their own lives. They also prompt children to think about the words and develop their cognitive skills for remembering new words. They also help learners “develop higher order thinking skills by having them analyse information in order to answer the questions” (Linse, 2005, P. 128).

Word for the Day

Select a specific word you will focus on each day. You can pre-select the word, or you can have learners decide what word will be featured. For example, if children are studying jungle animals, they could learn a different species each day, or you could ask each child to bring a new word relating to the jungle on their special vocabulary day. When you take attendance, instead of having children say *here* they can say the word of the day (Linse, 2005, p. 129).

Categories

Have each learner create a set of picture cards or word cards with different vocabulary items on them. Have them put one vocabulary item on each card. As they are working on their sets of cards, walk around and discuss the different words. Children who are four to seven years old can easily cope with 16-20 words, while older children can cope with up to 40 words for this activity. You can then ask your students to sort the words into two to five different categories of their own choosing. Then have them explain how they put the categories together. For younger or less advanced students, you may want to allow an *other* or *miscellaneous* category that learners can put a few in.

Example 2 shows how an 11-year-old may sort a set of words. Note that there are some words that could easily go into either category. It is important the categories are somewhat correct and make sense for the learner.

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Example 2:

Related to water

harbor
water
chilly
ocean
sea-sick
aqua
ship
foam
shark
octopus
sail
windy

Related to land

railroad
travel
mountainous
train
climb
valley

What's missing?

Place 12-20 picture or word cards on a table or the floor. Have your students look at the cards for a minute. Then have them close their eyes. Remove one card. Ask the group or an individual learner to tell you which card was removed. To make the game more challenging and interesting, have children describe the picture or word card that was removed. By describing what has been removed, your learners use more advanced higher-order thinking skills.

Mystery Words

Read or say a sentence aloud and leave out a word. Have your children guess the mystery word – the word that has been omitted.

If children come up with a word other than what you had in mind, you can tell them that it was a good guess but not what you were thinking. For example, if you say, *I wear a...on my head* and a learner says *cap*, you could say that you were thinking of another word but that *cap* also works. Children giving creative answers often leads to interesting discussions and discoveries. Children may be given different mystery words and asked to come up with their own sentences for their classmates to guess.

Guessing Games

One way to stimulate young learner interest is to play a guessing game about the different objects found in the picture. This helps learners develop higher-order thinking skills while working on vocabulary development.

The following extract is an example of a lesson with nine-year old learners who have had about a year and a half of English-language instruction. The children have been learning to read and write in English. Note that both nouns and verbs are included as part of the activity:

Extract

T: Please look at the picture. What do you see?

Ss: Bears

T: What are they doing?

S1: Playing.

T: Good. That's right. Let's look under the number 31. Let's read it together.

Ss: Bears go camping.

T: Very good. What does this tell you?

S2: The bears are camping.

T: Good. Now we're going to play a game. I am going to ask you some questions, and I want you to guess the answer. I want you to guess what I am going to need to go camping. OK?

Ss: OK.

T: I am going to go camping and I want to fish. What do I need?

Ss: Fishing pole.

T: Good. What number is it?

Ss: 8.

T: Good. Let's do the next one. I want to see at night. What do I need?

Ss: Flashlight.

T: Very good. (Linse, 2005, pp. 133-4)

It is essential that you use deliberate practice of words or grammatical patterns to help children memorise the language and retrieve it when needed. Enabling learners to produce patterns and vocabulary in a controlled way enhances their readiness to express themselves more freely in the language. Thus, the use of memorisation strategies is important for practising new vocabulary and grammar, but children also need these items in meaningful situations.

It is important to make the process of recycling and revising vocabulary and structures a fun activity rather than a simple repetition of drills. This can be done through introducing games and project work opportunities (Pinter, 2006).

9. Vocabulary for Young Learners

Very young children learn words related to the concepts they understand. Colours, for example, refer to vocabulary items which represent conceptual knowledge. Linse (2005) notes, "Coursebooks for young learners often emphasize nouns because they are easy to illustrate and because often young learners don't have literacy skills, so the only words that can easily be featured are nouns" (p. 121). However, vocabulary is not restricted to nouns; it includes verbs, adjectives, adverbs and prepositions. In addition, it includes lexical

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fields such as colours, days of the week, and action verbs. Children should be able to add these words to their vocabularies.

Pinter (2006) believes, "Children enjoy vocabulary learning. They pick up new words at an astonishing pace in both their first and second or foreign language and they can understand the concept of words well before the concept of grammar" (p. 88). Things that young children can see, feel, play with, touch can be introduced first so that children can interpret the meaning of these words without the use of the first language. Toys such as dolls can be used to present parts of the body, or puppets to act out a dialogue. Classroom objects such as the desks and chairs, the pictures and posters can be used as well. Teachers can also bring real objects such as apples, carrots, baskets, bags, hats, or anything that can be carried in a bag. Pictures and picture cards can be used together with a set of games and exercises.

Techniques of the Total Physical Response method can be used for presenting vocabulary, especially actions and movements (get up, turn round, stand up), where children can hear new vocabulary in a meaningful context and respond nonverbally.

In addition to mime and repetition, rhythm can also help children remember new vocabulary. Pinter (2006) suggests, "It is a good idea for teachers to use rich input; i.e. songs, rhymes,

rhythmical stories, which captures the natural rhythm of English. Children can move and clap to follow the rhythm" (p. 89).

Pinter (2006) believes, "Recycling vocabulary and grammar can be a good opportunity to explore words and structures dynamically. For example, children can create 'mind maps' on topics already covered such as 'holidays' or create poster displays with drawings and words. Memory games, such as 'I went to the market and bought...', can be an enjoyable way of revising food or animal vocabulary, but the principle of the same type of memory practice can be extended to other vocabulary such as presents in "For my birthday I would like ...", wild animals: "In the zoo I saw...", or household objects, such as "In my cupboard there are..." (p. 90).

10. Vocabulary for Older Learners

Explicit focus on vocabulary and grammar should be introduced through activities arranged for older children when they show an active interest in grammar forms such as by asking the teacher questions why a certain verb such as "drink" changes to "drank" but not "think" to "thank" in the story or song.

Older children can begin to move from learning the nouns of real observable objects and learn abstract words such as "friendship" or "freedom". They can be encouraged to look up words in dictionaries in the target language. They can begin to analyse and

compare first and foreign language equivalents and synonyms. Older children can use useful strategies to remember new vocabulary such as using cards that have an English word on one side and a synonym or foreign language equivalent on the other side.

11. Grammar for Young Learners

For younger children, vocabulary and grammar should be learnt in a holistic way and only when they grow older and begin to show interest in language analysis, can separation begin with the powerful tool of analysis while they continue to learn from rich input.

Holistic approaches such as stories are an excellent vehicle to teach vocabulary and grammar together. Listening to a story of the past, children will be able to recognize the past tense as a natural tense for stories rather than to be analysed or broken into component parts. Through stories, children will be indirectly exposed to grammar without the pressure of using it.

Similarly, children can learn vocabulary and structure together through songs. Pinter (2006) gives an example taken from the resource book *Very Young Learners* by Vanessa Reilly & Sheila Ward (1997) of teaching vocabulary and structure through a song. Pinter (2006) maintains:

Animal names are taught first but also the structure. 'It likes (doing something)'. First the children are asked to match pictures of the animals with the words. This is deliberate presentation of the new vocabulary. Then they pretend to be animals, mime the actions, and sing along. No direct attention is paid to grammar. The teacher might tell them the gist of the song in their first language; i.e. what the song is about, if they want to know. The children learn it through active participation, physical actions, and singing along without any reference to first language, manipulation of the component parts, or explanation of the grammar (p. 86).

12. Grammar Activities for Older Children

The introduction of language analysis can start with simple examples such as analysing the component parts of the following structure: 'Aux + Pronoun + Verb + Noun' as in 'Do you like pizza? Children have to create other sentences from jumbled up words similar to the model. This can be done in groups, pairs, or on an individual basis. Different colours for the different parts of speech can be introduced to teach useful metalanguage.

For older learners, children are encouraged to discover grammar rules for themselves in games such as describing differences between two pictures, which can be used to practise prepositions. It is also helpful to learn about grammar above sentence level to do some sort of writing in English. Older children need to learn about the rules of linking isolated sentences and paragraphs into coherent texts. Sentences, for example, can be linked together through linking devices or the use of pronouns as in the following two sentences: 'I've just got a new pet' and 'He is black and white'. The use of the pronouns 'he' indicates that these two sentences are linked together into a coherent piece of text.

13. Summary

Vocabulary as it relates to young learners, and as part of the four language skills was discussed in this chapter. Background information about how vocabulary and grammar are interdependent was illustrated together with the ability to recognize words and structures. Basic principles of vocabulary development were pointed out. Findings of the scientific research on indirect and direct vocabulary instructions were illustrated and questions about how to deal with vocabulary instructions were posed and suggested answers proposed. Various techniques and strategies for teaching vocabulary for young learners were provided. The chapter finished with

suggestions for deliberate practice of vocabulary and grammatical patterns through the use of certain activities for teaching vocabulary and grammar for both younger and older learners.

Finally, it seems difficult to divide grammar and vocabulary into two neat categories. As younger learners are not ready for analyzing components of language so vocabulary and grammar should be taught together at the same time. For older learners, teachers can separate vocabulary and grammar and include more explicit and analytical exercises.





12

Assessing Young Learners

I. Introduction

This chapter provides an overview of assessment and background information to assessing young learners of English. It presents methods of assessment for young learners and focuses on assessment techniques through classroom-based assessment activities.

2. What is assessment?

Assessment of learning is an integral part of the teaching-learning process. Generally speaking, teachers and learners need to know how well they are advancing in language learning. Effective teachers analyse young learners work to get evidence about their performance. They pay their careful attention to find out which students found the content too difficult or too easy. Based on his observation, the teacher then modifies his teaching by rephrasing a question or giving students a little bit time to provide an answer. On the other hand, if students can answer a question very quickly, the teacher might ask a more challenging question.

Assessment is then used to determine how well children are doing. Children on the other hand, need to know the quality of their learning. Teachers need to check what students will be able to do, say or write as a result of their learning. In other words, teachers want to check whether students are achieving the target objectives. For example, *at the end of a lesson, children will be able to...*

It should be mentioned that clear instructional goals can help the teacher assess whether these goals have been achieved (Cameron, 2001). On the contrary, if the teacher lacks well-defined aims and purposes, he won't be able to determine whether these have been achieved or not. School textbooks designed for Syrian students, such as *English for starters*, identify these objectives at the beginning of each unit. This can enable teachers to assess children's weaknesses or strengths in their attempts to achieve these objectives.

Teachers may base their teaching on the findings of the assessment process; whether students need to spend more time on one activity or another which seems to be difficult to grasp. This sort of assessment is called "formative assessment" which is used to inform and improve one's teaching. In addition to formative assessment, teachers need to engage in "summative assessment", which is used to evaluate students performance at the end of a course or a year and which is normally carried out to give students a certain certificate.

Assessment and evaluation are two different terms. "Assessment refers to collecting information and making judgments on a learner's knowledge, whereas evaluation is used when collecting and interpreting information for making decisions about the effectiveness of an education program" (Linse, 2005, p. 138, referring to Brindley, 2003). Thus assessment is concerned with what specific learners can do; whereas evaluation concerns the entire educational program and not just groups of learners. The information you obtain from assessment can be part of the wider evaluation of the entire program. The output of the evaluation process of an English-language program can end up with effective changes for better improvement of the quality of the teaching-learning process.

It should be noted that assessment should measure what students are able to do rather than what they do not know (Freeman and Freeman, 2004). In addition to an emphasis on the skills and knowledge that students have acquired, assessment should help the teacher understand what additional skills children need to acquire.

Validity and reliability are two important concepts that should be clarified when discussing assessment. "An assessment is considered to have validity if it measures the skill it is supposed to measure with a specific group of learners. When looking to see if an assessment activity is valid, you need to look at what the activity is and what it is supposed to measure" (Linse, 2005, P. 140).

Assessing Young Learners

The assessment activity and the skill assessed by each activity is illustrated by the following table (taken from Linse 2005, p. 140)

Assessment Activity	Skill Assessed
Learners put all of the pictures that start with the /t/ sound together	Phonemic awareness
Learners match a written word with the picture	Reading/ vocabulary
Learners listen to a story and then answer comprehension questions	Listening comprehension

Table 13. 1: Assessment Activity and Skills Chart

It is also important to determine whether the assessment is valid for the learners who will be taking the test. A test which is valid for beginning learners (12-13 years old) may not be valid for children (5-6) years old (Linse, 2005).

The assessment tool should also be examined for its reliability. The tool is reliable if the results are consistent over a period of time. Linse (2005) maintains for a test to have reliability, "The results should be consistent when different teachers administer the tests and/or different teachers score them. The test results should also be consistent if they are given on different days. For example, if a test is given on two different dates and the results are very similar, then we can say that it is reliable. Of course, the results won't be identical

because learners are human and won't always perform the same way on a different day or at a different time (Hughes, 1989, p. 140).

3. Background to Assessing Young Learners

Before choosing an assessment tool, some important considerations must be taken into account.

Expectations

Expectations for young learners should be reasonable. Native language speakers who use four-and five- word sentences to express themselves shouldn't be expected to use longer sentences in the foreign language. Expectations for children to become fluent in the language should also be reasonable. Children who take 4 or 5 hours of English, shouldn't be expected to be fluent in a short period of time. "It can take five to seven years for learners to achieve academic competence in English as a second language" (Linse, 2005, p. 141).

Wait Time

The teacher should wait at least five seconds for a child to respond to a question. He shouldn't interrupt children during this wait time. "By interrupting students before they have had time to process the information and form an answer, you not only miss an assessment opportunity, but you may also be conveying the message that you don't think they know the answer" (Linse, 2005, p. 141).

Instructions to Learners

Tests assess specific aspects of language use; therefore, instructions should be easy to understand. Furthermore, an example should be provided to clarify the instructions. Linse (2005) uses the following list of questions to determine if the instructions are clear:

- Are the instructions broken down into short sentences?
- Are the instructions written at or below the children's reading level?
- Is it clear what the children do first, and what they do next?
- Is all of the needed information included?
- Is the vocabulary used in the instructions appropriate for the children's age and language level? (p. 142)

Poor instructions should be turned into good instructions for young learners. Consider the following poor instruction:

Look at the list of vocabulary items and circle the corresponding letter of the item which does not belong. Note that one word is dissimilar. Sample item: a. cat, b. bird, c. house, d. fish.

These poor instructions can be turned into good instructions as follows:

*Look at the list of words. One word does not belong.
Circle the letter of the word that does not belong*
(Linse, 2005, p. 142).

4. Formal Assessment

Formal or traditional assessment is usually given in the form of a written test administered either by an individual teacher or mandated by the Ministry of Education. This test typically includes activities such as filling in gaps in sentences, answering multiple choice questions, matching two items of vocabulary. Such tests are easy to administer and they seem to be at the level of single sentences, and they are easy to correct. These traditional tests often do not work with younger children as they do not point out what children know and can do. Young children's knowledge of English often comprises, for example, being able to sing songs, participate in stories and games, mime an action story; i.e. things that are not easy and straightforward to assess objectively" (Pinter, 2006, p. 132).

Traditional tests "might also have a negative influence on teaching so that instead of singing, reciting rhymes, listening to stories, and playing games, children will have to spend time answering multiple choice questions in order to prepare for the test. This is often called the negative washback effect of tests" (Pinter, 2006, p. 132). In addition, traditional tests can be difficult and

stressful for children who lack the ability to write, and this may result in their lower grades which would discourage children and demotivate them to learn English.

As a teacher you should make sure whether the standardised test is valid and reliable. You also want to make sure whether the standardised test was essentially designed for students who are similar to yours. Private schools may use English as a second language tests in an EFL environment to test student's progress. "Unfortunately, the tests designed for ESL have not always proven to be valid with children in EFL settings" (Linse, 2005, p. 144).

5. Assessment Techniques

The method used for assessing children should be introduced in a friendly way. Assessment techniques for children should include activities used in their classrooms. "If traditional pencil and paper tests need to be used because of institutional restrictions, they should be considered together with other methods such as self-assessment, portfolio assessment or observations" (Pinter, 2006, p. 133). This will allow for a more comprehensive assessment of children's achievement.

Two main approaches to assessment should be taken into consideration: norm referencing and criterion referencing. "Norm referencing means that teachers compare their learners' achievement

with the norm, i.e. the class average. If someone is below average, they will get a low mark" (Pinter, 2006, p. 133). Pinter considers this approach inappropriate as it encourages competition among children and fails to take small individual progress into account. On the other hand, the 'criterion referencing approach' means that certain criteria have to be met and learner's progress has to be checked accordingly. Unlike the norm referencing, the focus here is on individual achievement; therefore, comparisons among children are discouraged.

Teachers of young learners who follow the criterion referencing approach encourage and praise everybody. "Children carry out tasks in familiar learning contexts in an environment that encourages confidence and builds self-esteem and as a result they are not worried about being assessed" (Pinter, 2006, p. 134).

Observation

Systematic observation is one of the tools that can be used to assess children's performance, in a non-intrusive manner. The teacher gives a certain task to children quite a number of times until they get used to it. Then the teacher observes their performance. In addition, observation can be used for assessing non-linguistic skills such as (engagement, interest, and motivation) which are key issues in primary English.

Self-assessment

Self-assessment is another alternative method for assessing children's performance. Self-assessment encourages children to think about their own performances and achievement. This way of assessment is in line with the learner-centred approach. Simple tasks for younger children should be provided slowly with the help of the teacher such as in the following table cited in Pinter 2006, p. 136)

Rate yourself on this scale	Very good ****	Good ***	Try again 2
I learnt all the words from this unit.			
I can talk about my family.			
I can count to 50.			

Table 13.2: A Simple self-Assessment Tool

Portfolio

Portfolio is a popular method of assessment used by teachers of young learners. A portfolio is a collection of a students' work which can help children grow and develop over time (Linse, 2005, Gronlund and Engle, 2001).

Portfolio "can include drawings, pieces of writing, and examples of crafts or even taped oral performance" (Pinter, 2006, p.136). Portfolios can also be used for collecting information about children's activities outside the classroom. Samples of classroom work that illustrate what has been done in classroom can be selected by the teacher and/or learners. This work is then examined to see what a student can do and the extent to which he has developed over time.

The various types of items that can be placed in a portfolio might include examples of student writing, activity sheets, audio recordings of the student speaking or reading orally, and projects (Linse, 2005). The following table is provided by the centre for information on language teaching and research (CiLT) which includes portfolio guidelines for children learning second or foreign languages. The items can be used to help learners document what they are able to do with languages as part of their overall assessment.

Getting Better! Self-Assessment

What I can Do in

Writing	Approx. NC level Single aspects	Approx. CoE Level
I can copy single words without making mistakes.	1	A1
I can label pictures using words I know.	1	A1
I can copy phrases and sentences correctly.	2	A1
I have reached the equivalent of the Council of Europe's BREAKTHROUGH LEVEL in Writing		
I can write two or three sentences with help from my books.	3	A2
I can write about things I like and dislike.	3	A2
I can write some words and simple phrases from memory fairly well	3	A2
I can write single sentences from memory and take notes for myself and others.	3-4	A2
I have reached the equivalent of the Council of Europe's WAYSTAGE LEVEL in Writing		
I can write a simple personal letter about myself and what I have been doing or what I am going to do.	5	A2-B1

Table 13.3: *CiLi My language Portfolio: Teacher's Guide* (2004, p.11. Cited in Linse, 2005, p. 156).

Portfolio assessment has several advantages. Linse (2005) mentions the following points:

Portfolios:

- can be used for students at all stages of language development.
- can reflect what students are learning and doing in class on a regular basis.
- can show a young learner's progress over time.
- can be used with virtually any coursebook (Linse, 2005, p. 157).

However, portfolios have the following disadvantages:

Portfolios:

- can be very easy to include too much.
- can be difficult to evaluate the individual items.
- can take a long time to learn how to use portfolios.
- can take a long time to maintain and assess all your learners' portfolios (Linse, 2005, p. 157).

This method of assessment can also motivate learners by getting them to focus on what they are good at and develop ownership of the learning process, thus promoting learner independence" (Pinter, p. 137).

This method requires much work on the part of the teacher who should provide feedback in writing, talk to children and monitor

their progress. The teacher also needs to take more responsibility for helping younger children to choose appropriate work. The active role of parents is also important in promoting their children's learning by taking an interest in the content of portfolios.

Project Work

Another alternative tool for assessment is the use of project work. Assessing children in groups is a logical assessment method if children often work in groups. This is a useful tool as it involves all four language skills and the joint work of the group.

It should be mentioned that group work gives weaker children the opportunity to learn from others and allows stronger children to display their knowledge. "Projects can work well in mixed ability classes if the members of the groups are carefully selected and all have appropriately defined roles and tasks and adhere to agreed rules" (Pinter, 2006, p. 137). Project work gives children the opportunity to demonstrate their non-linguistic strengths such as drawing or acting.

However, one of the disadvantages of group work is the difficulty of assigning grades for both individual work and group effort and to be fair. As a solution for this problematic issue, Pinter (2006) suggests giving children praise and general feedback rather than grades and using project work as part of formative assessment. Grouping children in a number of groups to find out which groups

work best for collaborative learning might lead to an interesting action project.

At the end of primary English programmes, summative assessment is usually used in most countries. A package of multiple forms of assessment including self-assessment can provide a better way to measure children's abilities.

6. Assessment of Language Skills

The following instructional activities will help the teacher to assess children's progress in the four language skills: listening, speaking, reading, and writing. Portfolios as assessment tools will also be considered.

Listening Skills

Two main components of listening assessment should be considered in the classroom: phonemic awareness (the ability to distinguish between different sounds) and listening comprehension.

Aspects of phonemic awareness include "the ability to distinguish between sounds, identify words that start or end with the same sound, and recognize rhyming words. If you are assessing the final sound /d/ and /t/, you could say the following words aloud: *Mad/mat, bat/bad, cat/cat, hid/hit, tot/ Todd, met/met*. It should be pointed out that the point of these activities is not to assess

vocabulary but rather if the children can discriminate between the sounds" (Linse, 2005) P. 146).

As for assessing listening comprehension, the teacher should make sure that children understand words, instructions, and texts. To assess if children understand a specific word or phrase, you can ask them to point to an object or picture. "If you want to assess if a child comprehends the names of fruit, you could place pictures of fruit on a table and say *please point to the banana*. If you ask your learners to point to a written word instead, you would be assessing both their listening and reading comprehension" (Linse, 2005, p. 147).

Total physical response (TPR) instructions can be used to assess children's listening comprehension of directions. Such instructions should be given only once at a time so that you can easily observe them while giving the command. "Assessing if children comprehend text they hear aloud can involve statements with pictures. For example, if children are listening to a story, you may ask, 'Show me what happened first. Point to the picture' or 'show me the picture of the child who was the best helper' " (Linse, 2005, p. 148).

Comprehension questions can be used to determine if children comprehend what has been said. For example, you can ask about what happened in the story you are reading. It is important to remember that children possess the speaking skills needed to answer

the questions. For example students need to know the past tense to describe what happened in a certain story.

Speaking Skills

You can assess young learners' speaking ability through asking questions and engaging them in conversations. You can either address your questions to the whole class or talk with individual students.

An analytic or a holistic rubric can be used for assessing learners' oral skills. "A holistic rubric provides one overall score. An analytic rubric provides information broken down into different categories" (Linse, 2005, p. 148).

The following student oral language matrix is an analytic rubric. Teachers can use this matrix to assess children's performance.

Assessing Young Learners

	1	2	3	4	5
A. Comprehension	Cannot be said to understand even simple conversation.	Has great difficulty following what is said. Can comprehend only social conversation spoken slowly and with frequent repetitions.	Understands most of what is said at slower-than-normal speed with repetitions.	Understands nearly everything at normal speech. Although occasional repetition may be necessary.	Understands everyday conversation and normal classroom discussions.
B. Fluency	Speech so halting and fragmentary as to make conversation virtually impossible.	Usually hesitant; often forced into silence by language limitations.	Speech in everyday conversation and classroom discussion frequently disrupted by the student's search for the correct manner of expression.	Speech in everyday conversation and classroom discussions generally fluent, with occasional lapses while the student searches for the correct manner of expression.	Speech in everyday conversation and classroom discussions fluent and effortless; approximating that of a native speaker.
C. Vocabulary	Vocabulary limitations so extreme as to make conversation virtually impossible.	Misuse of words and very limited vocabulary; comprehension quite difficult.	Student frequently uses wrong words, conversation somewhat limited because of inadequate vocabulary.	Student occasionally uses inappropriate terms and/or must rephrase ideas because of lexical inadequacies.	Use of vocabulary and idioms approximate that of a native speaker.
D. Pronunciation	Pronunciation	Very hard to	Pronunciation problems	Always intelligible.	Pronunciation and

pronunciation	problems so severe as to make speech virtually unintelligible.	understand because of pronunciation problems. Must frequently repeat in order to make him/herself understood.	necessitate concentration on the part of the listener and occasionally lead to misunderstanding.	although the listener is conscious of a definite accent and occasional inappropriate intonation patterns.	intonation of a native speaker.
E. Grammar	Errors in grammar and word order so severe as to make speech virtually unintelligible.	Grammar and word order errors make comprehension difficult. Must often rephrase and/or restrict him/herself to basic patterns.	Makes frequent errors of grammar and word order that occasionally obscure meaning.	Occasionally makes grammatical and/or word order errors that do not obscure meaning.	Grammar and word order approximate that of a native speaker.

Table 13.4: Student Oral Language Observation Matrix (The English Language Learner Knowledge Base, 2004, cited in Linse, 2005, p.149)

Assessing Young Learners

Comprehension refers to both speaking and listening comprehension as the two skills of listening and speaking cannot be separated. The other four categories: fluency, vocabulary, pronunciation, and grammar provide descriptors for assessing speaking skills. "The goal is to approximate a native speaker. Thus, students may score 5 on pronunciation without having mastered all of the phonemes. That's OK. Young native speakers haven't mastered them either" (Linse, 2005, p.150).

When children are required to use specific grammatical construction such as the present continuous, the teacher should make sure that his questions elicit the target construction (the present continuous) such as in the following example:

T: Hi, Cindy. How are you today?

S: Fine.

T: Here are some pictures.

S: OK.

T: Let's look at the picture of the family at the beach. Do you like going to the beach?

S: Yeah.

T: Who do you see at the beach? (The teacher points to the picture of the beach).

S: Mom, Dad, the brother, sister.

T: Can you tell me what that is? (The teacher points to a blue picnic table and waits four seconds for response).

S: It is a desk blue.

T: It is a blue table.

S: Yeah, it is a blue table.

T: What is the mother doing? (The teacher waits a full four seconds)

S: He is cutting a cake.

T: (Smiles) She is cutting the cake. What else is she doing?

S: Talking (Linse, 2005, p. 150)

Reading Skills

When assessing students' literacy skills, you will want to see if students can decode, sound-out, or pronounce the words and their ability to comprehend written text. Thus, assessing students' literacy skills is a complex process (Linse, 2005, p. 151, referring to Hurley and Tinajero, 2001).

A story map – a graphic summary of a story can be used to check students' understanding of the main ideas. Children are asked to describe the elements of a story: the settings, characters, conflict, and resolution according to the students' language and literacy levels. Linse (2005) gives the following example:

Assessing Young Learners

Setting/place: *Where does this story take place?* The forest

Characters: *Who is in the story?* Hansel and Gretel.

Conflict/Problem: *What was the main or big problem in the story?* Hansel and Gretel found an evil witch.

Resolution: *What happened with the problem? How did the story work out?*

A duck took them across the river so that they could go home (p.152).

Another useful technique can be used to assess children's literacy skills. A sequence of Event Story Map focuses on the order in which events took place: first, second, third, etc. This sequence helps children focus on the main events in the story.

Writing Skills

The technique used for assessing writing is to examine a sample of writing consisting of a sentence, paragraph or essay. An analytic or a holistic rubric can be used for this purpose. "The northwest Regional Educational Laboratory developed an analytic rubric based on a total of even traits which can be used with many different types of writing" (See Linse, 2005, pp. 153-155). Writing assessment should focus on ideas, organisation, voice of the writer through the

words, word choice, sentence fluency, convention of the mechanical correctness of usage and presentation.

7. Summary

Traditional tests are not usually effective measures for assessing children's work. A variety of alternative methods of assessment were suggested. It should be always kept in mind that teachers should foster a positive image and self-esteem in a collaborative environment rather than make assessment stressful and competitive. This chapter explored the meaning of language assessment as it relates to young learners. The chapter included background information about assessing young learners' performance. Techniques for assessing listening, speaking, reading and writing skills were presented.



Appendices

Appendix 1: Multiple Intelligences Inventories

Inventory A: Prospective Second Language Teachers

Directions

Read each statement. Write 0 if you disagree. Write 2 if you agree. Write 1 if you are somewhere in between. Total the number of points you have in each intelligence. Compare your scores. Which score is the highest (strongest intelligence)? Which is the lowest (weakest intelligence)?

0 = disagree

1 = somewhere in between

2 = agree

Linguistic Intelligence

1. I like to write papers and articles.
2. Almost everyday, I read something just for pleasure.
3. I often listen to the news on the radio or to cassettes of lectures, books, etc.

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4. I read billboards and advertisements.
5. When I read stories, I create clear images about the characters and places in my mind.
6. I use illustrations, charts, posters, and quotations frequently to add information to the papers I write.
7. If I hear a song or a commercial jingle a few times, I can usually remember the words.
8. I am a good letter writer.
9. I encourage others to spend time reading and writing.
10. I have written something that I like.

Logical/ Mathematical Intelligence

1. I feel more comfortable believing an answer is correct when it has been measured, calculated, or demonstrated in some way.
2. I can calculate numbers easily in my head.
3. I like my classes to be consistent with rules, routines, assignments, and other expectations clearly stated.
4. I like playing games such as hearts, bridge, gin rummy, chess, or checkers.
5. I like or have liked math classes in school.
6. I believe that most things have logical and rational explanations.
7. I like brainteaser games.
8. I am interested in new developments in the sciences.

9. I am good at solving problems.
10. I like to measure things exactly.

Visual/ Spatial Intelligence

1. I pay attention to the colors I wear.
2. I pay attention to the colors others wear.
3. I like to use visual aids in the classes I teach.
4. I like to draw.
5. I like to read articles containing many charts and illustrations.
6. I prefer textbooks with illustrations, graphs, charts, and pictures.
7. I like doing puzzles and mazes.
8. I notice the seating arrangement in a room almost immediately.
9. It is easy for me to find my way around unfamiliar cities.
10. I like to take photographs on trips and vacations.

Bodily/ Kinesthetic Intelligence

1. Many of my hobbies involve some form of physical activity.
2. I like to use activities in my classes that require students to get out of their seats and move around.
3. I find it difficult to sit for long periods of time.
4. I like to be involved in many forms of outdoor activities.
5. I often get my best ideas when I am jogging, walking, or doing other physical activities.

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6. When learning a new skill, I have to actually try it out in order to absorb it.
7. I like doing things that involve working with my hands.
8. I participate or have participated in one or more sports.
9. I like to dance.
10. I like to go on rides at amusement and theme parks.

Interpersonal Intelligence

1. I like to listen to other people's ideas.
2. I try to incorporate other's ideas into my own thinking.
3. I would prefer going to a party with strangers over spending the evening alone.
4. I like to discuss my problems with my friends.
5. My friends often seek help from me in solving their problems.
6. I like to entertain friends and give parties.
7. I like to meet new people.
8. I like to teach others how to do things.
9. I consider myself to have strong leadership qualities.
10. I frequently assume leadership roles and related positions.

Intrapersonal Intelligence

1. I often spend time reflecting on things that have happened in my life.
2. I plan for quiet time in my life.

3. I consider myself to be independent and not necessarily swayed by the opinions of others.

4. I keep a personal journal and record my thoughts and activities.

5. I prefer to study and learn new material on my own.

6. When hurt or disappointed, I find that I bounce back quickly.

7. I can articulate the primary values that govern my life.

8. I prefer to generate my own methods and procedures for learning new materials.

9. I often create new activities and materials to supplement my classes.

10. I have hobbies and interests that I enjoy doing on my own.

Musical Intelligence

1. I have a very expressive voice when I am in front of a class or in other groups.

2. I often incorporate music or chants into my lesson plans.

3. I can tell if someone is singing off-key.

4. I know the melodies to many different songs.

5. When I listen to music, I have no difficulty identifying or following the rhythm.

6. If I hear a new song a couple of times, I can usually remember the melody.

7. I often sing in the shower.

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8. I frequently listen to music.
9. Listening to music I like makes me feel good.
10. When I hear a piece of music, I can harmonize with it easily

Naturalist Intelligence

1. I like to be outdoors.
 2. I like to observe what is happening around me when I am outdoors.
 3. I like to hike and camp outdoors.
 4. I know the names of many different plants.
 5. I know the names of and can describe most of the plants and animals in my neighborhood.
 6. I like or have liked biological and life science courses in school.
 7. I support ecologists' efforts to preserve our environment.
 8. Knowledge of the world and how it works is important to me.
 9. I often look at the sky and can recognize different types of clouds and the weather they bring.
 10. I believe that all natural phenomena can be studied and explained
- (Christison,2005,pp.350-1).

Inventory B: ESL/EFL Students: Grade 5 to Middle School

Directions

Read each statement. Write 0 if you disagree. Write 2 if you agree. Write 1 if you are somewhere in between. Total the number of points you have in each intelligence. Compare your scores. Which score is the highest (strongest intelligence)? Which is the lowest (weakest intelligence)?

0 = disagree

1 = somewhere in between

2 = agree

Linguistic Intelligence

1. I read often.
2. I write notes and letters.
3. I tell jokes.
4. I remember people's names.
5. I like poems.
6. I know many words.

Logical/ Mathematical Intelligence

1. I do math in my head.
2. I am good at chess and/ or checkers.
3. I like to categorize.

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4. I like number games.
5. I like to solve problems.
6. I ask many questions.

Visual/Spatial Intelligence

1. I read maps easily.
2. I enjoy art activities.
3. I draw well.
4. I like to look at pictures.
5. I love books with illustrations.
5. I like puzzles.

Bodily/Kinesthetic Intelligence

1. I cannot sit quietly for a long time.
2. I like to dance.
3. I am good at sewing and building.
4. I am good at a sport.
5. I enjoy working with my hands.
6. I like to run and walk.

Interpersonal Intelligence

1. I am often a leader.
2. I can name two friends.
3. I like to study with friends.
4. I like people.

5. I have many friends.

6. I like parties.

Intrapersonal Intelligence

1. I like to go to places alone.

2. I prefer to study alone.

3. I know a lot about myself.

4. I keep a diary.

5. I set goals and achieve them.

6. I learn from my mistakes.

Musical Intelligence

1. I can hum tunes to many songs.

2. I sing well.

3. I play a musical instrument.

4. I sing in a choir.

5. I know when music is off-key.

6. I often listen to music

Naturalist Intelligence

1. I like plants.

2. I have a pet.

3. I know many different flowers.

4. I know many different animals.

5. I like to hike.

6. I notice trees and plants (Christison,2005,pp.347).

Appendix 2

Children's Songs and Finger-Plays

The Alphabet Song

A-B-C-D-E-F-G, H-I-J-K-L-M-N-O-P, Q-R-S, T-U-V, W-X, Y-Z,

Now I know my A-B-C's,
Tell me what you think of me?

Bingo

There was a farmer had a dog
And Bingo was his name-o.
B-I-N-G-O, B I-N-G-O,
B-I-N-G-O, and Bingo was his name-o.

... (clap) - I-N-G-O
... (clap)-(clap)-N-G-O
... (clap)-(clap)-(clap)-G-O
... (clap)-(clap)-(clap)-(clap)-O
... .. (clap)-(clap)-(clap)-(clap)-(clap)

Clap Your Hands

Clap, clap, clap your hands.

As slowly as you can.

Clap, clap, clap your hands

As quickly as you can.

Shake, shake, shake your hands

As slowly as you can.

Shake, shake, shake your hands

As quickly as you can

Roll, roll, roll you hands

As slowly as you can.

Roll, roll, roll you hands

As quickly as you can.

Rub, rub, rub your hands

As slowly as you can.

Rub, rub, rub your hands

As quickly as you can.

Wiggle your fingers

As slowly as you can.

Wiggle your fingers

As quickly as you can.

Pound your fists

As slowly as you can.

Pound your fists

As quickly as you can.

Five Little Fishes

Five little fishes swimming in a pool,
First one said, "The pool is cool".
Second one said, "The pool is deep".
Third one said, "I want to sleep".
Fourth one said, "Let's dive and dip."
Fifth one said, "I spy a ship".
Fisherman's boat comes,
Line goes ker-splash,
Away the five little fishes dash.

Grandma's Glasses

Here are Grandma's glasses,
(fingers around the eyes)
Here is Grandma's hat,
(hands on head)
This is the way she folds her hands,
(fold hands)
And lays them in her lap.
(folded hands in lap)
Here are Grandma's glasses,
(larger glasses)
Here is Grandpa's hat,

(larger hat)

This is the way he folds his arms,

(folds arms across chest)

Just like that

(with emphasis)

Head and Shoulders

(Point to each body part as they are mentioned)

Head and shoulders, knees and toes, knees and toes,

Head and shoulders, knees and toes, knees and toes,

Eyes and ears and mouth – and – nose,

Head and shoulders, knees and toes, knees and toes.

Hush, Little Baby

Hush little baby, don't say a word,

Papa's going to buy you a mockingbird.

If that mockingbird don't sing,

Papa's going to buy you a diamond ring.

If that diamond ring turns brass,

Papa's going to buy you a looking glass.

If that looking glass gets broke,

Papa's going to buy you a belly goat.

If that belly goat don't pull,

Appendices

Papa's going to buy you a cart and bull.
If that cart and bull turn over,
Papa's going to buy you a dog named Rover.
If that dog named Rover don't bark,
Papa's going to buy you a horse and cart.
If that horse and cart fall down,
You'll still be the sweetest little baby in town.

If You're Happy

(clap when the statement is true.)

If you're happy and you know it, clap your hands.

If you're happy and you know it, clap your hands.

If you're happy and you know it, then your face will surely show
it.

If you're happy and you know it, clap your hands.

If you're happy and you know it, stomp your feet.

If you're happy and you know it, stomp your feet.

If you're happy and you know it, then your face will surely show
it.

If you're happy and you know it, stomp your feet.

If you're happy and you know it, shout hurray.

If you're happy and you know it, shout hurray.

If you're happy and you know it, then your face will surely show it.

If you're happy and you know it, shout hurray.

If you're happy and you know it, clap your hands, stomp your feet, shout hurray.

If you're happy and you know it, clap your hands, stomp your feet, shout hurray.

If you're happy and you know it, then your face will surely show it.

If you're happy and you know it, clap your hands, stomp your feet, shout hurray.

It's Raining

It's raining, it's pouring,

The old man is snoring.

He went to bed and bumped his head

And couldn't get up in the morning.

London Bridge

London Bridge is falling down, falling down, falling down,

London Bridge is falling down, my fair lady.

Build it up with iron bars, iron bars, iron bars,

Build it up with iron bars, iron bars, iron bars, my fair lady.

Appendices

Build it up with gold and silver, gold and silver, gold and silver.

Build it up with gold and silver, my fair lady.

Take the key and lock her up, lock her up, lock her up.

Take the key and lock her up, my fair lady.

The Mulberry Bush

Here we go around the mulberry bush,
The mulberry bush, The mulberry bush,
Here we go around the mulberry bush,
So early in the morning.

This is the way we wash our face,
Wash our face, wash our face,
This is the way we wash our face,
So early in the morning.

This is the way we comb our hair,
Comb our hair, Comb our hair,
This is the way we comb our hair,
So early in the morning.

This is the way we brush our teeth,
Brush our teeth, brush our teeth,
This is the way we brush our teeth
So early in the morning.

This is the way we put on our clothes,
Put on our clothes, put on put clothes,
This is the way we put on our clothes,
So early in the morning.

Old Macdonald Had A Farm

Old Macdonald had a farm, E-I-E-I-O!
And on his farm he had some chicks, E-I-E-I-O!
With a chick, chick, here and a chick, chick there,
Here a chick, there a chick, everywhere a chick, chick,
Old Macdonald had a farm, E-I-E-I-O!
And on his farm he had some ducks, E-I-E-I-O!
With a quack, quack here and a quack, quack there,
Here a quack, there a quack, everywhere a quack, quack.
Chick, chick, here, and a chick, chick there,
Here a chick, there a chick, everywhere a chick, chick,
Old Macdonald had a farm, E-I-E-I-O
And on his farm he had a cow, E-I-E-I-O.
With a moo, moo here and a moo, moo there,
Here a moo, there a moo, everywhere a moo, moo.
With a quack, quack here and a quack, quack there
Here a quack, there a quack, everywhere a quack, quack
Chick, chick here, and a chick, chick there,

Appendices

Here a chick, there a chick, everywhere a chick, chick,
Old Macdonald had a farm, E-I-E-I-O!
And on his farm he had a turkey, E-I-E-I-O!
With a gobble, gobble here and a gobble, gobble there,
Here a gobble, there a gobble, everywhere a gobble, gobble,
With a moo, moo here and a moo, moo there,
Here a moo, there a moo, everywhere a moo, moo.
With a quack, quack here and a quack, quack there
Here a quack, there a quack, everywhere a quack, quack
Chick, chick here, and a chick, chick there,
Here a chick, there a chick, everywhere a chick, chick,
Old Macdonald had a farm, E-I-E-I-O.
And on his farm he had a pig, E-I-E-I-O!
With an oink, oink here and an oink, oink there,
Here an oink, there an oink, everywhere an oink.
With a gobble, gobble here and a gobble, gobble there
Here a gobble, there a gobble, everywhere a gobble, gobble,
With a moo, moo here and a moo, moo there,
Here a moo, there a moo, everywhere a moo, moo,
With a quack, quack here and a quack, quack there,
Here a quack, there a quack, everywhere a quack, quack,
Chick, chick here, and a chick, chick there,
Here a chick, there a chick, everywhere a chick, chick,

Old Macdonald had a farm, E-I-E-I-O!
And on his farm he had a donkey, E-I-E-I-O.
With hee-haw here, and hee-haw there,
Here a hee-haw, there a hee-haw, everywhere a hee-haw,
With an oink, oink here, and an oink, oink there,
Here an oink, there an oink, everywhere an oink,
With a gobble, gobble here and a gobble, gobble there
Here a gobble, there a gobble, everywhere a gobble, gobble,
With a moo, moo here and a moo, moo there,
Here a moo, there a moo, everywhere a moo, moo,
With a quack, quack here and a quack, quack there,
Here a quack, there a quack, everywhere a quack, quack
Chick, chick here, and a chick, chick here,
Here a chick, there a chick, everywhere a chick, chick,
Old Macdonald had a farm, E-I-E-I-O! (Linse, 2005,p.204-6).



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Helpful Web Sites

The Child Development Institute

(www.childdevelopmentinfo.com/index.htm)

A helpful web site for teachers and parents interested in learning more about children's development in different areas.

Songs for Teaching (www.songsforteaching.com)

This Web site provides a wealth of songs for teaching virtually every curriculum area. There are also songs designed to help children who are learning English as a second language. There are chants and finger-plays which can be used for making transitions from one activity to another activity.

Tongue Twisters for children

(www.indianchild.com/tongue_twisters.htm)

This site provides traditional and contemporary tongue twisters which are appealing to children of all ages.

The International Children's Digital Library
(www.icdlbooks.org)

This site provides on-line free access to published children's book. This project has been funded by the National Science Foundation and the Institute for Museum and Library Sciences and is striving to create a collection of over 10,000 books in 100 languages.

Little Explores English Picture Dictionary

(www.enchantedlearning.com/dictionary.html)

References

This site provides pictures and very straightforward definitions for over 2,400 words. It is a very useful site for planning vocabulary lessons. Often some of the simplest words are the hardest to explain.

Word Central (www.wordcentral.com/)

Merriam Webster, the dictionary manufacturer, has put together a very useful site designed to help children develop dictionary skills, develop an appreciation for words and expand their vocabularies. This site is designed primarily for native English speakers but is especially useful for teachers working with second- and foreign-language learners.

Council of Europe: European Language Portfolio
(www.coe.int/portfolio)

This site provides very useful information about putting together portfolios to assess language development. Links are constantly being added so it is helpful to check back often.

Northwest Regional Lab Analytic Writing Assessment
(www.nwrel.org/assessment/index.php)

The Northwest Regional Educational Lab has developed a set of rubrics using analytic writing assessment. These rubrics were originally designed for native English speakers, but educators quickly discovered that they are also appropriate for use with children learning English as both a second and foreign language. These rubrics can easily be downloaded.

Refereed Committee:

Prof.Dr. Elias Khalaf, Department of English Language and Literature, Al-Ba'ath University.

Prof.Dr. Abdullabbar Oayed, Department of English Language and Literature, University of Aleppo.

Prof.Dr. Ahmad Mohammad Al-Hassan, Department of English Language and Literature, Al-Ba'ath University.

Proofreader:

Dr. Sawsan Al-Jazairi, Department of English Language and Literature, Damascus University

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