

ANALYZING EDUCATIONAL ISSUES

In honour of
EMERITUS PROFESSOR PAI OBANYA

Analyzing Educational Issues

Edited by
A.O.U. ONUKA

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ANALYSING EDUCATIONAL ISSUES:

Essays in Honour of

Emeritus Professor Pai Obanya

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O.A.U. Onuka

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TEACHING READING AT THE PRIMARY LEVEL OF EDUCATION: PRACTICAL TEACHING METHODS EXPECTED OF THE TEACHER

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Preamble

This paper focuses on the subject English Language, but reading skills in particular. Efforts were made to bring to lime light those issues that could help learners become good readers and those that could hamper their ability to read. It also highlights things that teacher could do to help pupils overcome poor reading habit as well as poor reading culture. Thus the following areas will form terms of reference: meaning of reading; what children need to learn about reading; developing knowledge and strategies, how to accomplished this task, how to teach reading skills.

Introduction

In Nigerian primary schools, English language is the medium of instruction, except during indigenous language lessons (e.g. Igbo, Hausa, Yoruba, etc.). Textual materials in all school subjects but indigenous languages are also written in English Language. Furthermore, it is the official language for business, in government circles, as well as the mass media. It is thus accepted that English Language is a very important school subject, and for this, the Nigerian primary school curricula tend to emphasize effective teaching of English Language skills so as to improve pupils' academic performance. The basic skills of English Language learning include listening, speaking, reading and writing. However, this paper discusses mainly reading skills especially how it could be taught by teachers.

Supporting young children with their development as readers should be an exciting prospect for all those working with children in their early years. Building on the knowledge of reading that they bring with them, developing favourite texts are the

key experiences that young readers should have, and is closely linked to the development of tastes and preferences for reading. To achieve this may require that class teachers see the school books that they use in the classroom as interesting. If they do not find them interesting enough to read through all over, then why should the children? Children need books that they can interact with time and time again. Thus, developing favourite texts is the key experience that all young readers should have, and is closely linked to the development of taste and preferences. Thus, the objective of this paper includes the fact that having gone through it, readers should be able to:

1. Define Reading.
2. Discuss what young Children need to learn about reading.
3. Distinguish how practitioners could teach reading.
4. List and types of reading.

Meaning of Reading?

SOME IDEAS

Reading is the ability of a reader to recognise printed words. Reading is the ability of the reader to recognize printed letters of words. To understand a word, you have to read all the letters in it; to understand a sentence, you have to read all the words in it. It could also be referred to as a selection process involving partial use of available minimal language clues (graphical, semantic and syntactic) selected from perceptual inputs on the basis of the reader's expectation. Reading is a meaningful activity because it is a process of interaction between the author and the reader. In the school setting, the need to be able to read is obvious. Children are expected to read textbooks in order to learn. It is assumed from the homework assignments given to the children that they can obtain information from the printed page independently. All the tests and examination they will take while in school require the ability to read and understand examination questions. It is obvious that the chances of success for school children who cannot read are severely limited. This highlights the close relationship between reading ability and academic achievement.

Outside of the school, children still need good reading ability to cope with the challenges of their everyday living. Newspapers, comic magazines, manuals, letters from friends are there to be read. Reading never ends! Therefore, parents and teachers should, ensure that each and every reading activity you introduce children to

reflect on the fact that the purpose of reading is to make sense of print. The first words that children learn to read should not only be words they can use when they speak, they should be words that are of personal importance to them. That is, they should be words that children can associate with significant objects, persons and events within their immediate environment.

To acquire reading proficiency, children require adult guidance as well as abundant opportunity for practice. This explains why in developed countries, reading is regarded as the most important subject on the primary school timetable. In order to be effective in your effort to help children learn to read, you need to have a good understanding of what reading is. This is important for at least two reasons: One, your idea of what reading is will influence the way you teach reading. Secondly, how you teach reading will affect children's attitudes towards reading and the extent to which they learn effectively. Now, why don't you pause for a moment and ask yourself what your definition of reading is? The answer may not be farfetched. One primary reason why we read is to obtain information. Thus, comprehension, or understanding, is the ultimate goal for reading.

Comprehension means a persons' ability to understand something. However, when it concerns a written passage, it connotes the extent to which the reader is able to identify the main ideas in a text, and the details explaining them. Comprehension questions also tests how well candidates understand the use of language through idioms, figures of speech, vocabulary, among others. How do we comprehend a text? Let us illustrate this with the passage given below:

It was a Saturday. Mrs. Obi wanted to go to the market. As she stepped out of the house, she looked into the sky. Then she went back into the house to get her umbrella.

What we already know about the topic of the text, as well as our familiarity with the words and sentence structures used in the text, equally play an important role in comprehension. This means that during reading there is interaction between what the text says and what the reader already knows. This fact, of course, suggests that we, as parents and teachers, have an important responsibility in ensuring that our children come to the reading task with a rich background of experiences which they can use to make sense of the printed word. In fact, attention should continue to be paid to developing oral language in children, even after they have passed the initial stage of learning to read. An important activity for doing this is to read aloud to children regularly and to give them the opportunity to discuss what has been read to them.

What Children Need to Learn about Reading

SOME IDEAS

The essential understanding needed by children to enable them benefit from formal teaching of reading include the following:

1. **Developing good disposition to reading.**

A child's disposition to reading is the way the child behaves or feels about reading. In a nut shell, this implies one's level of willingness to read. Such could be observed when a child finds pleasure and satisfaction with books, sees books as a powerful source of enjoyment, information gathering and understanding of the world around him or her. Another attitude that children should develop is that of self confidence. Developing self confidence entails inculcating in children, the tendency to feel sure about their abilities, qualities, or ideas. They should be encouraged to help them develop a firm belief that they can learn how to read and that they can read well too.

However, being a good reader requires that a person should learn how to concentrate and be persistent on reading activities, whether of recommended text or not. The pupils should understand that because they are beginning to learn how to read, there is the tendency that they encounter some challenges such as word recognition, decoding the meaning of words seen for the first time, proficiency level, among others. They should be encouraged to consult significant others in their environment (home or school) for help as a preparatory for perfection. They should have confidence and not be afraid or shy of reporting cases of difficulty encountered during reading exercise to people around them. Thus, they should be ready to correct any reading errors they encountered. Above all, pupils should be taught to be reflective in reading. Being reflective entails a child's readiness to avoid not wanting to read or having no emotional attachment to reading.

In summary, teachers should encourage children to:

- ❖ Find pleasure and satisfaction: to see books as a powerful source of enjoyment,
- ❖ information and understanding;
- ❖ Have confidence in themselves: a firm belief that they will learn to read;
- ❖ concentrate and be persistent in reading;
- ❖ be ready to correct errors;

Developing Knowledge and Strategies

Here, children need to understand:

- ❖ that letters or texts are the same for every reading material and that the marks on the page tell you what to say;
- ❖ that we read and use books in a particular order – from front to back;
- ❖ that we follow the print in a certain order: line by line, word by word;
- ❖ that print is made up of letters, words, punctuation and spaces;
- ❖ that there are relationships between the words spoken and the print observed;
- ❖ that language is composed of separable words;
- ❖ that words are made of individual letters;
- ❖ the rules of English spelling and a reliable sight vocabulary;
- ❖ how to use their knowledge of the world and content of books to aid word identification;
- ❖ that when we read we rely on print to carry the message;
- ❖ that print is different from pictures;
- ❖ that books and prints have a particular orientation;
- ❖ how to use all these various devices together.

How Can This Be Accomplished

Teacher's role

The teacher should practice the following:

- ❖ take time to get to know a wide range of children's books yourself;
- ❖ act as a role model for the children, demonstrating enthusiasm for and interest in books and other reading materials;
- ❖ plan for a wide range of reading experiences which include incorporating reading into children's play experiences;
- ❖ develop effective and informative ways of monitoring the children's progress that truly reflect all aspects of the reading process, not merely the acquisition of sight vocabulary;

- ❖ provision of a literacy-rich environment (provision of charts – of days of the week, equipment, notices, instruction, etc);
- ❖ Writing captions/labels under paintings (e.g. drawing children's attention to their friends' names with labels and what he/she likes doing);
- ❖ Providing educators and children with a rich varied selection of books to use in the classroom;
- ❖ Developing favourite texts (e.g. making books about the pupils and their favourite foods, toys and activities, etc.);
- ❖ Using prints outside the environment by going for a 'looking-for-print walk' among others.

How Can Practitioners Teach Reading Skills? What is Teaching?

SOME IDEAS

To teach means to cause someone to know especially by showing and instructing through the use of rules, examples or experience. It could also mean to impart knowledge or guide someone through the studies of something. The methods to be used to ensure that knowledge is being imparted could depend to a reasonable extent on the age of the learner. Advocates of early years education tend to suggest that during this stage, children learn through diverse ways and as a result recommend the use of different teaching methods during instructions.

Ways a teacher can introduce a reading text

A

To introduce the text with short discussion of the topic.

Gives a guiding question.

Reads the text. Students listen while reading, then answer the question.

Present new words, using examples in English.

Asks a series of questions on the text. Students give short answers.

B

Read out a vocabulary list from the book. Students repeat in chorus.

Read the text aloud, sentence by sentence. Students repeat.

Students read the text aloud round the class.

Ask questions from the book, and give the answers. Students repeat in chorus.

Ask the same questions again.

Students answer around the class.

Other methods recommended for teachers use during teaching-learning in reading activities include:

Group Reading

SOME IDEAS

This involves a group of learners reading around multiple copies of the same text. This provides similar opportunities, if the right atmosphere for learning and risk taking is created. During the reading session, the children listen to the story read out loud first by the teacher or leader, joining in if they wish. They then take turns to ask questions about each of the passages of the book, either to each other or to the adult present.

Teacher's Role

To achieve this, the teacher should:

- ◆ try to provide several copies of the text to be read (including non-fiction, comic);
- ◆ ensure that each pupil has a copy of the text;
- ◆ use group of texts by one author/illustrator, so the children can identify similar features;

- ♦ encourage discussion about and acting out the characters. He or she may ask the children the character each would like to be or not want to be, and why, etc?
- ♦ Encourage the use of props with the groups of books.

Reading Out

SOME IDEAS

This involves children reading out words aloud for others to hear. This gives the teacher the opportunity to listen to the pupils in his/her class pronounce words, check their sight vocabulary, assess how much they have acquired of known texts and their understanding of what they are reading, measure their reading standard as well as how much listening skills they have acquired. Teacher could use the whole-class arrangement, put children into groups of threes and fours or individualize the reading exercise.

The Teacher's role

When a teacher uses this method, he or she should endeavour to:

- ♦ use texts that are within the readability level of the pupils;
- ♦ serve as a role model;
- ♦ create an enabling environment devoid of excessive noise;
- ♦ provide corrective feedback mechanism; and
- ♦ reinforce the pupils positively as much as possible and make them believe that they can become good readers with practice.

Use of Advance Organiser

David Ausubel (1963) defined Advance Organiser as a framework or information pattern presented to the learner in advance of the new learning material to help facilitate his learning. Ausubel points out that "the most important single factor

influencing learning is what the learner already knows". This according to him forms the crucial element in advance organizer and points to the fact that a learner's prior knowledge plays very important role in the way he approaches a new learning task. The prior knowledge thus serves as an organisational framework for incoming materials. In fact, to him the incoming materials are more meaningful to the learner if there are available concepts in his memory. Thus, advance organisers play active role as link or bridge between the cognitive structure of the learner and the new learning material in order to ensure that the learning material is more meaningful. Results from various studies on advance organisers carried out in Nigeria by scholars (Egbugara, 1983; Adegile, 1999) all showed clearly that students who are taught with advance organiser perform much better than other students.

Teacher's role

- ◆ Identify the main idea of the text
- ◆ Prepare pre-question
- ◆ Prepare the key word organiser

Using Stories

All children love story books and especially love to have favourites repeated. For instance, if a teacher wants to teach the reading of /ɑ: / words, she tells the story (using pictures) of words that have this sound. For instance, "a visit to the park by children in a car", "a star in the sky"; "a mark on an arm"; "a dog barking", a dark forest", among others. The teacher demonstrates, makes the sound while the children imitate and make the sound likewise. Once the children can identify and make the /ɑ:/ sound, they can equally read /ɑ:/ words like "far", "car", "mark", "park", "art", "hard", "class, etc, independently. So whenever they see the sound, they quickly remember the story and link it up with the sound, thereby reading fluently. The younger the child the more similar type of stories they like. This is because the human mind was designed to think in story, not simply absorb facts. Montessori (Henniger, 2005) noted years ago that children best make sense of the world through story.

Teachers Role

Any teacher using this method should observe the following:

- Create mini-lessons in any subject with stories which may help the children have the mental picture of the facts he or she wants to present;
- present new materials in sequential order
- place materials where they will be reached by children
- specify every particular detail of how each reading lesson will be presented to ensure accurate replication.
- observe in order to connect the child with suitable materials.
(Goffin, 2001)

Whole Word Teaching Method (Sight and Say)

The whole word teaching method, also known as 'look and say' or 'sight reading' is a popular method for teaching and reading (Krashen, 2003). It is the most widely used method of teaching/ reading in the U.S. and many other countries. Whole Language "founders" believe that children should, be taught from the beginning to read whole words (Broomley, 2002; Byrne, 2005; Mayer, 2003).

Whole language is said to be "Literature-based" because children are expected to learn these words by "reading" them as teachers read stories aloud. After they have thus read them enough times they will recognize them and be able to read by themselves. It teaches reading skills and strategies in the context of authentic literature. Word recognition accuracy is considered less important than meaning accuracy: therefore, there is an emphasis on comprehension as the ultimate goal. Children taught with this method memorize the appearance of words, or learn to recognize words by looking at the first and last letter from rigidly selected vocabularies in progressive texts (such as "The cat is in the hat"). This method teaches children to read words as whole units, rather than breaking the word down into individual letters or group of letters. Children are repeatedly told the word name while being shown the printed word, perhaps accompanied by a picture or within a meaningful context. For instance, if a teacher wants to teach 'three letter words', a new word like 'cat' will be systematically introduced to the pupils by letting them see the word, hear the word, see a picture or sentence referring to the word, and later spell the word. Eventually children learn to "sight read" the word, recognizing it through pattern recognition without any conscious attempt to break the word down into its parts. Over time, children build up larger and larger vocabulary of whole words which they can recognize. The whole language approach takes a more holistic

view, whereby teaching is focused on child centered instruction and natural language experiences. This approach suggests that children learn to decode words by context and build language ability. The theory is that the answer or final product isn't as important as the process of learning.

Teachers Role

- Provide enough reading materials to go round the children;
- Encourage children to identify and name letters;
- Use materials with illustrations children are conversant with;
- Select enough vocabularies for words, sounds or letters you want to introduce;
- Progress from simple to complex, e.g. letter identification, two letter words, three letter words, with enough words in each category;
- Provide pictures of the word names provided as much as possible;
- Encourage spelling, writing and pronunciation of the words identified; and
- Ensure the teaching/ learning process is child centered.

Synthetic and Jolly Phonics Teaching Method

Synthetic Phonics also known as inductive phonics is a method of teaching/ reading which first teaches the letter sounds and then builds up to blend these sounds together to achieve full pronunciation of whole words. Synthetic phonics does not teach letter names until the children know their letter(s)/ sound correspondences thoroughly and how to blend for reading and segment for spelling. It is employed to teach phonics to children when learning to read. This method involves examining every letter within the word as an individual sound in the order in which they appear and then blending those sounds together. With synthetic phonics, children are taught to read and spell at the same time. They are taught to convert letters into sounds and then blend the sounds to form words. For example s-i-t = 'sit', or d-o-g = 'dog'. It also teaches children to segment (pull apart) those sounds in order to spell. For example hen = h-e-n, or shook = sh-oo-k; which means that synthetic phonics uses the concept of 'synthesizing' meaning 'putting together' or 'blending'. Simply put, the sounds prompted by the letters are synthesized (put together or blended) to pronounce the word.

Teacher's Role

- Teach the sounds that the letters make (e.g. 'sss' not 'es' and 'mmm' not 'em') before children begin to read books.
- Teach the sounds of the most commonly used letters (i.e. /s/, /a/, /t/, /i/, /p/, and /n/). Then teach children how these sounds can be 'blended' together to form many two, three or four letter words (e.g. sat, tin, pin etc).
- teach consonant blends (e.g. bl, cl, dr, st etc) separately because they can be 'sounded out'.
- teach two letters that make one sound such as /th/ and /sh/ as separate sounds.
- teach them the sounds of the English Language and other common 'rules'.
- aid them to understand the alphabet code so that when they come across an unknown word, they do not guess from context, picture, initial letters or word shape.

Jolly Phonics is different from many phonics programs that focus more on the 26 letters of the alphabet. Teachers and teacher aides have successfully used this method since 1992. American schools gradually introduced this method in the classroom as research out of the United Kingdom suggested that it was an effective method for helping young learners learn early writing skills and recognize the phonetic sounds of each letter.

The letters are taught in six groups of sounds, beginning with s, a, t, i, p and n. This initial group of sounds helps a child maximize his or her ability to learn and form many three-letter word combinations such as sat, tap, nap and sit. They are then taken through the stages of blending and segmenting words to developing reading and writing skills. For instance, a teacher can form as many as 20 words from these six letters. Study Table 1. The initial words to begin with may include s, a, t, i, p, n. Examples of words formed with these letters.

Table 1: Sample of letters to form words with s, a, t, i, p, n.

Two Letter Words	Three Letter Words	Four Letter Words
is, it, in, at, as, an	sit, sat, sip, sap, sin, tip, tap, tan, tin, nip, pin, pat, pit, pan	spin, snap, spat

Jolly Phonics is a commercial programme created by U.K. primary teacher Sue Lloyd. She developed the programme in order to support a small group of children in her class who were unable to progress in reading using the whole language approach. In 1977, as part of an experiment, these children were taught structured blending of words. They were taught to listen carefully to the sounds in the words, identify the sounds and relate them to the letters. As a result, these students who were previously demonstrating difficulty in reading and writing had significant improvement in abilities (Lloyd, 1998).

Teachers Roles

- Be creative enough to identify children in your class, those who are slow learner;
- Develop groups of sounds which your learners can combine to form words;
- Teach them how to identify initial, middle or last consonant sounds;
- Introduce them to consonant blends – e.g. the word “sat” is identified as “s-a-t”.
- Generate words and read them out to the children (role modelling) while they listen;

Educationists know that teaching children how to read is a basic requirement for various other aspects of learning. Teaching Phonics is the key to learning to read and write. Synthetic Phonics is one of the most popular approaches used to learn how to improve literacy skills. Jolly Phonics, which results are based on scientific research, is a fun and child-centered approach to teaching literacy through synthetic phonics. Overall, we can conclude that a synthetic and Jolly phonics methods, as a part of the reading curriculum, could have a major and lasting effects on children's reading and spelling attainment.

Types of Reading

It will also be important for teachers to inform learners that different types of reading exist. This will help them know the one to adopt when they are engaged in reading activity. Types of reading include:

Silent Reading: Silent reading involves looking at a text and saying the words silently to oneself.

Survey Reading: In survey reading, the reader quickly glances through the chosen task in order to grasp major points expressed in it quickly and to discover overall organisation of the material in a very short time.

Speed Reading: The objective of speed reading is to obtain general familiarity with the content, by scanning at exceptionally high speed. This type of reading supplements survey reading and strengthens its value and it also provides a quick review of the material previously read. The reading rate should be between 15,000 and 20,000 w. P. m.

Phrase Reading: The aim of the phrase reading is to strengthen comprehension while it increases reading rate by the reading ideas instead of reading word by word. The rate of reading is between 300 and 1,000 w. p. m.

Close Reading

Close reading needs a hundred percent concentration on the part of the reader. Its aim being to clearly understand and store information in a logically organized manner so that the reader can recall easily and later make use of his experience in the course of reading.

Inquiry Reading: This type of reading involves a longer span of concentration and the reader is able to discover deeper level of meaning. Inquiry reading stimulates curiosity and helps to overcome boredom.

Critical Reading: By critical reading the reader is able to make a critical appraisal and analysis of what he has read. By gaining a deeper understanding of what has been read the reader is better positioned to analyse the material's significance. After reading, the reader is able to make his own personal judgement on the information retained in the course of reading. The reading rate is between 50-500 w. p. m.

Aesthetic reading: Aesthetic reading affords one the opportunity of increased understanding through the discovery of deeper meanings within a written work. It heightens personal experience through the clarification of one's own thought and moods: adds or increases awareness of life through sharing the experience and attitudes of others: enhances greater fulfilment of one's potential by the stimulation of new directions of thought, perception and feeling. This type of reading is mainly for enjoyment and it helps us to expand and enjoy our awareness of literature, including the reading of prose, poetry and dramatic work. The reading rate is from as many words to about 400 w. p. m.

All the above mentioned types of reading are quite vital to a good grasp of the content areas of the various school subjects in our primary schools and should consequently be encouraged among the pupils. In fact, specific periods should be set aside for practising some of these types of reading in the classroom setting.

Other Issues to Consider When Teaching Reading

1. Recognise the difference between teaching of reading and teaching of English

When children are first learning how to read, they should only be taught written words that already have meaning for them in speech. It is too much to expect a beginner reader to learn the meanings of words and to learn to recognize them in print all in the same lesson. Therefore, the reading books we use with children should contain vocabulary and sentence structures that children are familiar with in speech.

Another mistake that is often made by parents and teachers is to use oral reading as an opportunity to correct a child's pronunciation. It is important to keep in mind that the essence of reading is understanding, and one doesn't have to read aloud, or even to pronounce each word perfectly, to understand what one is reading. If a teacher uses the reading lesson to teach pronunciation, the child is likely to concentrate only on the way he calls words rather than on getting meaning from what he is reading. The time to correct children's pronunciation is in oral English lessons, not in reading lessons.

2. Make reading an enjoyable experience

This means that those working with children should aim at aiding children develop positive attitude towards reading. To achieve this, practioners should carefully avoid "rushing" or "forcing" children to read. Teachers must constantly reduce the possibility that the books they are using may be too difficult for some children, and must be prepared to use simpler books whenever necessary. Reinforcement in terms of praise and encouragement of children, especially poorer readers for whom reading is too difficult a task must be used to encourage children to derive more satisfaction from reading. The books we expose the children to should be meaningful and enjoyable for them. As much as possible, provide children with interesting story books as well as textbooks to read. Remember also that children's attention span is short. Therefore, do not overstretch them. As soon as an activity is becoming boring, or their attention begins to wander, stop such an activity and introduce other types of activities.

3. Be a model

There is an adage which says that examples are better than precepts. This is particularly important in helping children learn to read. There can be no adequate substitute for a good model of reading for children. Children need to see that reading is important and it is not enough just to tell them so. They need to see their parents and teachers enjoying reading and displaying enthusiasm for reading. This way, you can demonstrate to your children/pupils that reading is not just for passing exams, but is an important part of daily living.

4. Be patient with the learners

It is easy to get discouraged when you think that the pupils in your class are not making enough progress. Remember, learning to read is a complex process and it takes time to master. Don't give up on the children because you feel they are dull or too playful. Instead, consider the possibility that the children may not have been sufficiently "ready" for a particular reading activity, or that your approach may not be suitable. Care should be taken not to destroy a child's self-image and curiosity for learning. A good rule to remember is that children learn best if their parents and teachers show that they believe in their learning abilities.

5. Encourage growth in reading skills

There is the temptation to assume that once children begin to read they no longer need our guidance. However, learning to read is a continuous process and reading skills continue to grow if children receive adult guidance and support at every stage of their reading development. Part of the role of the adult is to expose children to a wide range of reading materials. It is also important to encourage young readers to attempt books which are advanced enough to stretch their reading skills. Learning to read is a continuous process. It never ends!

6. Material Availability

Instructional resources which are educational inputs are of vital importance to the teaching of any subject in the school curriculum. Instructional materials are in various classes, such as audio or aural, visual or audio-visual. An audio-visual instructional material however, is a combination of devices which appeal to both the sense of hearing and seeing such as television, motion picture and the computer.

The importance of instructional materials in education cannot be underscored. They have been used for centuries to facilitate teaching-learning activities. A teacher can use instructional materials in various ways to make his or her instructional efforts more efficient, effective and thus more productive in terms of pupils learning and

growth. He or she can also use them to arouse and sustain learners' attention, present facts and information, teach concepts and principles, guide thinking and induce transfer of learning. He or she can even sometimes use the materials to help him or her and his/her pupils assess attainment of learning. Instructional materials have been found to be facilitators of learning and hence their use should be emphasized and encouraged. Thus the expectation in any reading activity is that there must be materials to be read. Secondly, every participant should have access to what is being read. This will aid the learners to participate actively in the reading instruction. Enough reading materials can be acquired by a teacher through the help of the learners. Consider a situation where in a class of forty pupils every child has a text to share with others, all kept in a common place, the teacher then will be playing with at the least forty different reading texts. He or she already has a library.

When this opportunity is available, the teacher is expected to keep these books in low-shelves, so as to allow children to choose the ones they need independently. The titles should be well displayed so that children can choose which book to read and easily return them after use. The implication of this study type of arrangement is that children can learn at their pace. They can also extend their learning with or without the teacher's help, since the materials are always available and within their reach.

Adequate material provision in the classroom may have significant effects on pupils' disposition towards reading. It is unfortunate that in Nigeria, teachers cannot provide supplementary readers, teaching aids and instructional materials on their own and those provided by the government are few and expensive. Aside this, those provided are usually kept in the head teachers office, thus, depriving those they are meant for from using them.

If meaningful reading is to take place, our school libraries should be properly equipped with books dealing with several topics that will be of interest to the pupils. Unfortunately, majority of our schools libraries are not equipped. If you go into what some of the schools call libraries, you will discover that they are mainly make-shift type of libraries containing very few books or none at all for each of the school subject. We hardly expect pupils to develop interest in reading when they do not have the wherewithal to practise the much needed reading skill. Our various governments, both Federal and States, should strive to ameliorate this deteriorating situation before it goes out of hand. There is no doubt the present economic depression is taking its toll on everyone but this is no tenable excuse; for, long before we were confronted with the so-called economic depression, many of our schools had been long neglected.

Recommendations

1. It is suggested that reading should be taught in schools to help the pupils tackle problems of comprehending the written symbol and to help them remember what they have been reading.
2. Reading should be taught to help learners in interpreting graphs, tables, charts maps, etc.
3. Reading should be taught in the content area of each discipline as a school discipline to help learners master the various disciplines.
4. Materials provided should be relevant to the subject areas the children will be exposed to.
5. Such materials should be provided ahead of the real teaching and learning activity such that they would have been engraved in the learners' memory.

This is because the materials present in the learner's memory provide reference points for the materials to be read and are called subsumers. They are very important because they make the new material meaningful to the learner. When a material relevant to those in the learner's memory is introduced ahead of the instruction to serve the function of a subsume, such is called an advance organiser, i.e. it goes into the learner's brain in advance of the new learning material to organise the new materials for the child.

Conclusion

All children need the skilled help of informed and sympathetic adults, who appreciate their strengths and weaknesses, have a clear idea of the goal ahead and engage the children's interest and commitment. They also need to encounter texts that are involving, manageable and satisfying, and give them a clear sense that they are making progress. If all these occur in ways that are exciting and inspiring, then our young children will certainly acquire the skills needed in reading. Primary school teachers should always remember that if they are to help their pupils develop reading skills in a foreign language, it is important to understand what is involved in the reading process itself. We should have a clear idea of how 'good readers' read, either in their own or a foreign language. This will enable us decide whether particular techniques are likely to help learners better or not. In considering the reading process, it is important to distinguish between two quite separate activities: reading for meaning (silent reading) and reading for fun.

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