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ABSTRACT

Oral communication and reading correlate well with each other. Objectives, established by the teacher, must be clearly stated and should be challenging, but achievable for students. They need to stress knowledge, skills, and attitudinal objectives with a balance among these three categories. Objectives to be stressed are that students need to: speak clearly so that listeners understand that which has been stated orally; enunciate content with appropriate stress, pitch, and juncture; have ideas in mind pertaining to what is being communicated; be respectful of the thinking of others; assist committee members or groups to be successful in collaborative endeavors (in which all should participate); emphasize proper grammar and usage in orally presenting ideas; use appropriate syntactic and semantic structures in sentences; work harmoniously with others in collaboration; and help in having recognition needs of all met. A variety of learning opportunities for student interests, personal needs, and purposes in oral communication must be in the offing so that objectives may be achieved. Basal reading approaches have numerous opportunities for students to develop oral language proficiency, and personalized reading has much to offer also. In addition, the experience chart procedure in teaching reading has recommended oral language activities, as does the Big Book approach. Also, reader's theater may be implemented, generally on the intermediate grade level. Home and school need to be integrated; at parent/teacher conferences the teacher and the parents must agree on children reading aloud to the former as a goal for the ensuing school year. (Contains 11 references.) (NKA)

Oral Communication in the Reading Curriculum.

by Marlow Ediger

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ORAL COMMUNICATION IN THE READING CURRICULUM

There are a plethora of oral language experiences possible in the reading curriculum. It is excellent to bring in oral language activities into reading when the latter is being emphasized. Oral communication and reading correlate well with each other. The teacher then needs to establish objectives of instruction which are vital for pupils to achieve. These objectives must be clearly stated and should be challenging, but achievable for pupils. They need to stress knowledge, skills, and attitudinal objectives with a balance among these three categories. Learning opportunities need to be chosen which may assist learners to attain the chosen ends of instruction. Assessment results should indicate if pupils have been successful in goal attainment (See Ediger, 1992, 70- 74).

Objectives in Oral Communication Skills

High, achievable objectives need to be in the offing for pupils to attain. These objectives need to be understood by pupils and modeled for them by the teacher and others. The following objectives then should be stressed:

- 1. pupils need to speak clearly so that listeners might understand that which has been stated in oral use of language.**
- 2. pupils need to enunciate content with appropriate stress, pitch, and juncture.**
- 3. pupils need to have ideas well in mind pertaining to what is being communicated.**
- 4. pupils need to be respectful of the thinking of others.**
- 5. pupils need assist committee members or groups to be successful in collaborative endeavors. A rude member can greatly minimize a discussion.**
- 6. pupils need to let all participate in any collaborative work, not the few only.**
- 7. pupils need to emphasize proper grammar and usage in orally presenting ideas.**
- 8. pupils need to use appropriate syntactic and semantic structures in sentences expressed.**
- 9. pupils need to work harmoniously with others in collaboration.**
- 10. pupils need to help in having recognition needs of all be met (See Ediger, 1993, 57- 59).**

Pupils need guidance and assistance to achieve each of the above objectives in a developmentally appropriate

curriculum. A variety of learning opportunities suitable for pupils interests, personal needs, and purposes in oral communication must be in the offing so that objectives may be achieved.

Learning Opportunities in Oral Communication and Reading

First, in basal reading approaches, there are numerous opportunities for pupils to develop oral language proficiency when

1. background information is being provided prior to pupils' reading the new selection. Pupils, here, may ask questions and make comments about the information needed to understand the ensuing reading selection.

2. purposes are set for reading a selection in that pupils' questions may serve as reasons for reading and those reasons being to secure necessary subject matter to answer the identified questions.

3. content read is being discussed within the whole class setting or within a committee framework.

4. small group work is being emphasized as a followup activity. A project may be developed whereby a purpose or objective exists, planning is done to achieve the objective, and evaluation is in evidence to determine the quality of the project.

5. dyads are engaged in specific tasks to achieve objectives of reading instruction and to improve oral work (See Ediger, 1993, pp. 4,5).

Creative dramatics may be stressed whereby pupils have the content well in mind from a story read in the basal; the contents is used to develop a creative presentation in drama form. Uniqueness and novelty are wanted for the presentation. Pupils decide which role they wish to play and then interact orally with each other in their respective chosen play parts. It is difficult to have the content well in mind from the story read and then put the ideas into a creative dramatization for other members in the class as well as for other pupils in school to observe. The props need to be very minimal. This is an informal, not formal, presentation with educational and creative values (Ediger, 1990, p. 4).

Second, personalized reading has much to offer in the area of oral communication. Here, a pupil selects a library book to read, from among others. The pupil is the chooser. Books are generally chosen in a sequential manner on the basis of being personally interesting and meaningful. After the completion of

reading a book, the pupil has a conference with teacher. In a conference setting, the pupil with the teacher may orally

1. discuss relevant content read.
2. read aloud a section in the library book for the teacher to notice achievement in reading skills.
3. raise questions over the meaning of selected passages.
4. summarize main ideas read.
5. assess the self in what has been achieved and what is left to achieve in reading content.

Story telling may meet the oral communication needs of selected pupils. Thus, a pupil may choose content from a library book read and develop a related creative story. The resulting product/process may enhance story telling ability on the part of the involved pupil.

Sustained Silent Reading (SSR) relates directly to personalized reading in that a pupil selects and reads sequential library books, but generally no conference is held with the teacher in this highly informal approach in teaching reading (See Cho and Krashen, 2001, 170- 174).

Third, the experience chart procedure in teaching reading, emphasizes that pupils in a committee or the class as a whole view a set of objects, for example, on an interest center and then present ideas orally for the teacher to print on the chalkboard. Pupils can then see talk in printed form being written down. The printed contents from the chalkboard may be read together with the teacher several times, as needed, to assist pupils to develop a basic sight vocabulary as well as develop proficiency in reading. The experience chart, especially for young children, has the following recommended oral language activities, among others:

1. collaborative efforts put forth to develop the experience chart.
2. practice in presenting ideas for the chart.
3. reading and rereading the contents aloud.
4. cooperation among learners in the read aloud.
5. reading the filed and stored contents at a later time, when a basic sight vocabulary has been established (See Ediger, 1968, p. 30).

Fourth, the Big Book approach in teaching reading may be stressed. Here, a quality library book large enough for all to see in the primary grade group, to be taught, is used by the teacher to teach reading. The Big Book, for example, for first graders

begins the lesson with pupils looking at the large illustrations and discussing them with the teacher to achieve background information. The illustrations are appealing and encourage learner interest in reading. The teacher reads the related print underneath an illustration as pupils follow along by looking carefully at each word which the teacher points to as the reading activity progresses. Rereading occurs as often as desired so that pupils develop a basic sight vocabulary. Oral language activities in the Big Book approach that occur here are the following:

- 1. pupils discussing the large illustration contained in the reading lesson to be pursued.**
- 2. pupils reading along with the teacher each indicated word in print on the page of the inherent illustration (See Ediger, 1989, 90- 95).**
- 3. pupils rereading the content with teacher guidance.**
- 4. pupils briefly being encouraged, as readiness permits, to notice words which begin alike as well as those ending alike in the Big Book approach in reading instruction.**
- 5. pupils being encouraged to discuss briefly what has been read. The Big Book procedure is largely teacher directed in the teaching of reading with encouragement of oral language activities (See Fu and Lamme, 2002, pp. 241- 250).**

Fifth, reader's theater may be implemented, generally on the intermediate grade level. Here, a library or textbook may be used which contains an adequate amount of direct quotes, indicating conversation, by characters in the story. Pupils with teacher guidance need to practice reading and rereading the narrative content. Pupils individually may then choose a play part to read aloud in the reader's theater presentation. After pupils have chosen respective play parts to read aloud, another reader, the narrator, reads the intervening background information as contained within the conversational parts in the story. Each reader needs to polish his/her oral reading part. Blending each speaker's role in reader's theater is salient to make for a successful presentation. For the presentation, reader's may sit in a circle, preferably on elevated stools, so they are clearly visible to viewers. Oral language experiences to stress in reader's theater might well be the following:

- 1. reading orally with expression to role play the individual part being read.**
- 2. collaborating with participants to make for a successful reader's theater experience.**
- 3. developing further reading skills such as fluency in the**

delivery of the role being played.

4. practicing for an audience performance in which reading skills are honed.

5. learning to face an audience as the play part is being read (See Gunning, 2000, 373- 374).

Reading Aloud to Parents

Oral communication skills in reading may well be extended to the home setting. The home and school need to be integrated, not separated entities. What is done in the home as well as in school may be communicated in diverse means such as through

1. e- mail and fax.
2. telephone calls and letter writing.
3. parent/teacher conferences and open house held in school.
4. messages brought by the pupil to and from the school/home.
5. school and classroom newsletters.

During parent/teacher conferences, the teacher and the parents need to agree on children reading loud to the former as a goal for the ensuing school year. Pupils, at home, then have opportunities to

1. practice reading new content from a library book as well as reread a previously read book.
2. obtain help to identify unknown words in a one to one situation.
3. polish reading skills such as increased fluency in reading as well as reading in thought units.
4. make discoveries intrinsically in phonics and syllabication.
5. retell what has been read to the parent (Ediger and Rao, 2000, Chapter Seven).

Pupils need to have a plethora of opportunities to gain reading skills. They need to be able to rehearse what has been read as well as be able to say in their words that which has been read. Making use of and applying ideas gained from reading is vital. This assists pupils to relate learnings acquired. In addition, pupils also need to

1. think critically pertaining to subject matter read. This involves analyzing facts from opinions, fantasy from reality, and accurate from inaccurate information. Detecting bias, band wagon approaches, and “joining the crowd” persuasions also

need to be assessed.

2. think creatively about subject matter read. Here the pupil might write a related poem, draw one or more illustrations, make a model, do a pantomime, rewrite the beginning or ending, or revise the character(s), setting, or plot of a story read.

3. perceive gaps in knowledge read. Here, pupils perceive a problem, individually or collectively. The problem needs to be clearly stated so that it may be solved. A variety of learning opportunities must be pursued to obtain information in answer to the problem. An tentative hypothesis results. The hypothesis is tested in a life like situation. It may then need revisions or modifications, or accepted as is, based on evidence.

4. assess the value of the information or data obtained. Here, the pupil(s) evaluate the quality of the information or ideas gleaned. Selected information has more worth as compared to other content, as perceived by the learner.

5. obtain holism in information secured. Fragmented knowledge lacks value for the pupil(s). Pupils tend to develop wholeness from the parts. The wholeness integrates parts of fractional knowledge. Fractional parts then become a whole or an entirety (See also Yopp and Yopp, 1992).

Reading skills which stress cognition need to be cultivated by pupils with teacher guidance. These kinds of skills stress the use of the intellect in achieving facts, concepts, and generalizations. Oral communication is advanced through the use of higher levels of cognition. Quality attitudes may well result when pupils individually are successful learners.

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