Chapter 1

Technology–Infused Balanced Literacy for Enhancing the Reading Skills of Early Grade Children

Amar Ali Khan
National University of Sciences and Technology (NUST), Pakistan

Manzile Maqsood
National University of Sciences and Technology (NUST), Pakistan

Sajid Umair
National University of Sciences and Technology (NUST), Pakistan

ABSTRACT

English is considered as a universal and global language. It serves as a bridge between different cultures and countries. Owing to its great importance research studies are being carried out across the world in order to find out the best ways of teaching English Language at earlier stages of schooling. One such identified way is balanced literacy. This is a systematic approach towards teaching English not as a subject but as a language. This study was conducted to see the effect of technology infused balanced literacy approach on the learning skills and engagement level of English learners in context of Pakistani schools where English is taught as a second Language. An intervention of six weeks was carried out. During the study the conventional teaching methodology of English was also observed. The results of the study suggest the use of balanced literacy for improvement of reading skills.

INTRODUCTION

Reading is a fundamental and significant aspect of education. Various educational surveys undertaken by organizations reveal that students in Pakistan are lagging behind in reading scores in English language. Students in Pakistan are struggling with reading. The ASER (2014) report shows that only 57% of the 5th grade students were able to read sentences which they are supposed to be able to read in grade 2

(Daily Times, 2015) The same survey showed that the difference in reading level of Public schools and Private school, 63% of Grade 5 school children were able to read grade 2 level sentences as compared to 57% in Public Schools. Similarly, a report by UNESCO shows that 36% grade 5 students are unable to read an English sentence (5.5 Million out of school children UNESCO report, 2014). This is resulting in low literacy rate, low reading outcomes and decreased student performance. To overcome these barriers, pedagogical reforms are needed for proper imparting of English reading comprehension.

One such Pedagogical reform is known as Balanced Literacy Approach. Unlike the conventional approaches of teaching reading comprehension, which focuses on reading drills, this approach takes in account different strategies to build sound reading capabilities of the students. The Balanced Literacy Approach usually requires enhanced amount of class duration, to decrease this time taken technology comes into play. Through proper use of technology, the components of Balanced Literacy Approach can be imparted without consuming additional class time.

The focus of this study is to see the effectiveness of Technology Infused Balanced Literacy Approach as compared to conventional skill based approach in primary schools. In skill based approach the students are passed through mere reading drills and no focus is laid on their comprehension and phonic abilities. Whereas the Balanced Literacy Approach, through its multiple facets, takes in account different strategies like Read Aloud, Guided Reading, and Shared reading this not only improves the reading capabilities but also enhances the comprehension skills of individuals.

A balanced literacy instruction can solve the problem of under achievers in reading and increase the reading potential of struggling reader (Baumann, 1997). In public schools the whole focus is on skills based approach, where the English is taught from curriculum books and stress is laid upon the learning of curriculum words (Bibi, 2009). This skills-based approach is also taking students away from reading books whether these are general or academic. It makes the students unable to apply the learned topics outside the classroom (Carr, 2007). To encourage students for reading books their reading skills needs to be enhanced, for this enhancement a methodology is needed to resolve this issue of low reading outcomes. Balanced Literacy, in which, reading comprehension is taught in interesting and effective way can be used to enhance the reading skills and stop this deviation of students from book reading. Books contains a treasure of knowledge, reading reduces stress and results in improved memory. It is a well-known saying that "Readers of today are leaders of tomorrow".

Reading

"Reading is the process of looking at a series of written symbols and getting meaning from them" (My EnglishClub, 1997). The effective and proper reading takes place when the meaning is taken out of these symbols.

Reading plays an important role not only in education but also in the day to day life of individuals and society (Freire, 1983). In education, its role is obvious, as the basic element for learning is a book and to get meaning out of the book one has to know how to read (DeMit, 2014). Similarly, in daily life one comes across reading medical prescriptions, reading traffic signs, reading the newspaper and such other things involves reading.

The main goal of reading is not just to read but to derive meaning of what is being read. For deriving meaning reading comprehension comes into play. The ability of reading a text, processing it and then understanding it is called Reading comprehension (Taboada, 2012). Fundamentals of reading compre-

13 more pages are available in the full version of this document, which may be purchased using the "Add to Cart" button on the publisher's webpage: www.igi-global.com/chapter/technology-infused-balanced-literacy-for-enhancing-the-reading-skills-of-early-grade-children/186169

Related Content

An Exploratory Mixed Method Study on H5P Videos and Video-Related Activities in a MOOC Environment
Stefan Thurner, Sandra Schön, Lisa Schirmbrand, Marco Tatschl, Theresa Teschl, Philipp Leitnerand Martin Ebner (2022). *International Journal of Technology-Enhanced Education (pp. 1-18).*
www.irma-international.org/article/an-exploratory-mixed-method-study-on-h5p-videos-and-video-related-activities-in-a-mooc-environment/304388

Instructional Real World Community Engagement
Caroline M. Crawford (2019). *Advanced Methodologies and Technologies in Modern Education Delivery (pp. 64-78).*
www.irma-international.org/chapter/instructional-real-world-community-engagement/212801

Effects of Computer-Based Training in Computer Hardware Servicing on Students' Academic Performance
Rex Perez Bringula, John Vincent T. Canseco, Patricia Louise J. Durolfo, Lance Christian A. Villanuevaand Gabriel M. Caraos (2022). *International Journal of Technology-Enabled Student Support Services (pp. 1-13).*
www.irma-international.org/article/effects-of-computer-based-training-in-computer-hardware-servicing-on-students-academic-performance/317410

A Model for Teacher Training to Improve Students' 21st Century Skills in Online and Blended Learning: An Approach From Film Education
Julia Breddermann, Juan-Francisco Martínez-Cerdáand Joan Torrent-Sellens (2018). *Online Course Management: Concepts, Methodologies, Tools, and Applications (pp. 530-558).*
www.irma-international.org/chapter/a-model-for-teacher-training-to-improve-students-21st-century-skills-in-online-and-blended-learning/199228

Counter-Narratives: Voicing Against Dominant Black Narratives With Identity Issues in Toni Morrison's Selected Novels
Horizan Prasanna Kumar, Meadows Boseand Alagesan M. (2020). *Innovations and Technologies for Soft Skill Development and Learning (pp. 178-184).*
www.irma-international.org/chapter/counter-narratives/255664