

Teaching Reading in Today's Elementary Schools

Chapter 2 Study Guide Questions (*Emergent Literacy*)

- What does the term "emergent literacy" mean?

Development of Cognition and Language

Cognitive Development

- How do Jean Piaget's theories of cognitive development inform the reading instruction of young children?
- Why should teachers apply developmentally appropriate practice with young children? Name at least two reasons.
- Describe the difference between Lev Vygotsky's notions spontaneous and scientific concepts. How do these concepts impact the instruction of young children in an emergent literacy classroom?
- How are the "zone of proximal development" and "scaffolding" related?

Language Learning

- How do young children learn language?
- What is "metalinguistic awareness" and what is its role in an emergent literacy classroom?

The Emergent Literacy Classroom

- On what assumption(s) is/are emergent literacy based?

- What are some “basic concepts about print”?
- What are the teacher’s role and responsibility(ies) in an emergent literacy classroom?
- How does a child’s freedom of choice in the classroom setting impact his/her learning? What are some ways that you might promote freedom of choice in your classroom?

Establishing a Print-Rich Classroom Environment

- What does a “print-rich” classroom environment mean?
- Give two examples of “environmental print.”
- In what ways should an emergent literacy classroom resemble a natural home environment?

Involving Parents

- Why is parent involvement important in the development of emergent readers and writers?
- What are some ways that the text mentions in order to strengthen home-school connections? What way will you try to strengthen home-school connections (even if you are not a teacher of emergent readers and writers)?

Listening and Speaking

- Specify some ways of addressing and developing the following skills in young children:
 - Listening

 - Oral Expression

- What is “dramatic play” and why is it helpful for young children?

- What is “creative dramatics” and how is it different from creative play?

Reading and Writing

- For each of the following concepts, think of a corresponding classroom application or example. In other words, ask yourself the question, “If the concept is true, then what is a possible classroom application/example for that concept?”

**Note: You may want to complete this question after reading further in the section to be able to generate more ideas for classroom applications.*

Concept	Implication in the Classroom
1. Children construct their own knowledge of reading and writing through experimentation and discovery. By bringing the knowledge they already have to new situations, they make connections and look for patterns in printed words.	Example: <i>When I teach, I need to be sure to give time for children to activate their background knowledge about a situation. For example, if we are reading a story about animals (in a read-aloud situation), I will begin the story sharing time with a discussion about the children’s experiences with animals, perhaps writing the names of animals on chart paper or the board so they can see the names of the animals as we talk about them. We might talk about the beginning sounds of those animal names and make connections with the initial letters of the animal names (i.e., looking for patterns and beginning to make sense of sound-symbol correspondences).</i>
2. Growth in reading and writing occurs jointly and along with growth in oral language. Each language art supports the others in a related way.	
3. Children learn reading and writing by actively using them for real purposes. A major	

task for the teacher is to structure the environment so that children can explore language in meaningful ways.	
4. Teachers need to consider individual differences in children's abilities, interests, and experiences when planning instruction.	
5. When necessary, teachers intervene in language learning to help children make connections and move ahead.	
6. Reading and writing activities take place throughout the school day, not in separate instructional periods.	

Learning to Read

- For each of the seven factors that enter into the process of a child learning to read, give an example, explanation or description of that factor. State how the factor might be addressed in classroom activities or its impact on learning to read.

Factor	Example/Explanation/Description
Physical Features	Example: Children need to learn directionality of reading (left-to-right, top-to-bottom) through a lot of practice. Regressions are where a child goes back and re-reads a previous word or phrase. Regressions are helpful if a child uses them to make self-corrections. I could address directionality in a reading lesson by creating a pocket chart story or by printing a story on chart paper and then using a pointer or my hand to point to each word as I read it, modeling directionality as we read together. I might even model how a regression could be helpful by intentionally making an error and then going back to self-correct, all the while talking to myself to show how such a regression might work.
Experiential Background	
Print Conventions	
Sight Words	
Letters and Sounds <i>Auditory Discrimination</i> <i>Visual Discrimination</i> <i>Letter Recognition</i> <i>Phonemic Awareness</i> <i>Alphabetic Principle</i>	
Reading Centers	

Reading Materials	

Learning to Write

- Summarize the guidelines for teachers of kindergarten writers on page 61. Which guideline do you think is the most important and why?
- What are invented spellings? How are they helpful to children learning to write?
- What is “purposeful writing”? Give several examples of types of purposeful writing.
- What is the purpose of having a “writing center” in a classroom?

At the end of reading this chapter, return to the chapter’s opening notes. Are you able to do all of the listed objectives? Are you able to define all of the terms that appear in the chapter?