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Teaching literacy in kindergarten

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Teaching literacy in kindergarten

Abstract

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Teaching Literacy in Kindergartens

A Graduate Research Paper

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by

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

Background

The development of the kindergarten began in the nineteenth century. However, the role of kindergarten has changed as society and the views of children have changed (Nielsen & Monson, 1996). Frederick Froebel, the founder of the original kindergarten, taught using craft activities called *Occupations*, manipulative materials called *Gifts*, and songs and games called *Mother's Plays and Songs*. In 1856, Marguerite Meyer Schurz started the first kindergarten in the United States in Watertown, Wisconsin. Also during the 19th century, Elizabeth Peabody developed the first English speaking kindergarten in Boston. Then in 1873, Susan Blow started the first public school kindergarten in St. Louis. She agreed with Froebel and used books, plays, songs, and *Occupations* in her curriculum.

Although the first kindergarten was developed in 1837, schools have been teaching children to read even before then. In colonial America, people read to acquire religious information and inspiration from the Bible and prayer books. The Massachusetts Bay Colony instated the Act of 1647, called the Old Deluder Satan Act, which required every town of this colony to provide elementary education for its children, with the main focus on reading. The main purpose of reading at this time was comprehension, though the teaching method emphasized word recognition, instructing children to sound out first single letters, then word fragments, and finally entire words (Schwartz, 1988).

The way to teach reading has been debated and has changed over the years. In the nineteenth century, Horace Mann substituted a whole-word approach instead of the phonics method mentioned previously. Children were told to memorize entire words before they

analyzed their letter/sound relationships. Mann believed that this would result in improved comprehension of written material (Schwartz, 1988).

In the 1830s the famous *McGuffey's Readers* made their debut. The purpose of education during this time was primarily moral with the reading material focusing on parables, patriotic stories, and moral lessons. Also, during the nineteenth century, reading materials were developed according to an organized plan of sequential steps. Phonics instruction became popular again by the late 1800s. In the twentieth century, sequential planning of instruction and emphasis on phonics were used in basal readers, although their content was no longer focused on morality (Schwartz, 1988).

John Dewey suggested that language and literacy development occur through the child's active involvement in experiences. Jean Piaget, another literacy-learning theorist, expanded Dewey's view, but it was Lev S. Vygotsky's learning theory that provided a deeper understanding of how language and literacy learning occur (Nielsen & Monson, 1996). Vygotsky believed that learning occurs because of social interaction between the child and an adult. During interactions (storybook experiences, conversation, play, writing) the adult supports the child by modeling and *scaffolding* responses and questions. The adult builds a bridge between what a child knows and is learning. The support that the adult provides moves a child from dependence to independence in literacy activities (Nielsen & Monson, 1996).

A common belief for generations was that students would learn to read once they received formal education in first grade. Children came to school, were taught the same thing at the same speed, and were expected to learn to read. Thus a high rate of failure occurred, and students were required to repeat instruction until they could be passed on to

the next grade. Based on this high occurrence of failure, educators during the 1920s began to look at the child before first grade, and the concept of readiness for reading emerged. Researchers during this time looked at one of two readiness prerequisites: maturation and experience. The maturation view suggested that when a child was mentally mature, he or she would be ready to read. A study by Morphett and Washburne (1931) suggested that reading instruction should not begin until a child reached a mental age of 6 years, 6 months. Following this study, many reading readiness tests were created to determine a child's mental readiness for reading instruction. Reading readiness workbooks were then added to many basal reader series in the 1930s, promoting the view that rather than wait for maturity to naturally occur, it could be bolstered through instruction, one form of experience (Nielsen & Monson, 1996).

Basal readers have been used since the 1830s and have undergone some changes since the 1970s. Today they depict different settings and characters. The characters are of different ethnic groups, handicapped and older people appear as story characters, and stereotypes towards males and females are guarded. These basals have also shown an increase in the number of new words introduced, a decrease in the number of repetitions of words, and heavier emphasis on phonics instruction than comparable texts from the 1950s and 1960s (Schwartz, 1988).

Teaching literacy in kindergarten classrooms has taken many turns during the nineteenth century. Some educators believe reading should not be taught at all in kindergarten while others advocate for it. Most agree that kindergartners need to learn all the letters of the alphabet and the sounds each letter makes. In the past, children learned to read after entering first grade. In today's society, more emphasis is placed on academics in

kindergarten and students are coming to kindergarten with prior school experiences, thus leading to even more debates on literacy development and how and when reading should be taught. Another controversy is the debate between whole language instruction versus phonics.

Overall the kindergarten classroom has seen significant changes. At one time kindergarten was viewed as a time for children to make the transition from home to formal education. Art, music, and play used to be the primary areas of emphasis. Many kindergarten teachers today say that helping children learn to get along with each other is one of the most important functions of kindergarten, but they still feel the pressures to teach academics, particularly literacy development (Nielsen & Monson, 1996).

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study is to examine ways of teaching literacy in the kindergarten and to present guidelines for effectively implementing literacy instruction in the kindergarten. To accomplish this purpose, this paper will address the following questions:

1. What are the different types of literacy instruction?
2. What are the benefits of instructing reading in the kindergarten?
3. What are the problems associated with teaching reading in the kindergarten?
4. What are the guidelines for teachers implementing literacy instruction in kindergarten?

Need for the Study

The early childhood years are a very important time for early learning. During this time children will either develop a love for reading or become discouraged if they have difficulty in learning to read. Debates over when and how to teach reading were evident in the past and will continue in the future. Therefore, determining guidelines is necessary for instructing literacy in kindergarten for children to learn to their potential and to have enthusiasm for learning.

Trends have come and gone in literacy development; among these trends are whole language and phonics (Brown & Mathie, 1990). Teachers need to realize the benefits and problems associated with both of these areas. Some professional organizations have taken a role in the decades-old phonics debate. The National Council of Teachers of English and the International Reading Association both have policy statements emphasizing the importance of phonics instruction within a comprehensive reading-writing program (Dahl, Schrarer, Lawson, & Grogan, 2001). Their statements show the importance of phonics instruction within a literacy program and that teachers need to understand how different components of literacy instruction can work together.

Limitations

The majority of the research examined for this study was from recent years. There were some gaps of little or no information on literacy in the kindergarten when looking at the background of this topic; because of this, some references had to be used extensively. While there is a lot of current literature on literacy, the trends of how to instruct reading seem to be very opinionated. Another limitation with this study was the lack of availability of some of the sources, for some of the literature studies that would enhance this study

were unavailable. This study is limited to the literature studies that provide information on types of literacy and what approaches work best for teaching kindergarten.

Definitions

For purposes of clarity and understanding the following terms will be defined:

Alliteration: “identifying the sound that comes at the beginning and end of word” (Smith, 1998, p. 21).

Guided Reading: “Guided reading is a context in which a teacher supports each reader’s development of effective strategies for processing novel texts at increasingly challenging levels of difficulty” (Fountas & Pinnell, 1996, p. 2).

Invented Spelling: “Sometimes called functional or temporary spelling, invented spelling is the usual name given to students’ developing orthography as they are exploring and learning the rules that adults use to spell” (Crafton, 1994, p. 180).

Phonemes: “Phonemes are the smallest units of sounds in a language”. The English language has between forty-four and forty-six sounds. Phonemes are divided into two categories: consonants and vowels (Schwartz, 1988, p. 36).

Phonemic Awareness: the awareness that words are made up of individual sounds (Dahl et al., 2001).

Phonics: “Phonics is the set of relationships between the sound system of oral language and the letter system of written language” (Goodman, 1986, p. 37).

Shared Reading: This reading experience offers a way teachers can use engaging texts and authentic literacy experiences to help children develop the strategies necessary for effective, independent reading (Button & Johnson, 1997).

Whole Language Instruction: Instruction that provides a rich language environment that stimulates vocabulary development, comprehension, creativity, and writing skills (Smith, 1998).

CHAPTER 2

REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

Types of Literacy Instruction

There are different types of literacy instruction to use in teaching kindergartners. Some of these have been used for many years while others are beginning to gain popularity. Two ways of teaching reading that have been debated for years are whole language instruction and phonics instruction.

Whole language approaches in teaching reading focus on the interests of the young readers to motivate instruction (Ediger, 2001). The teacher uses a rich language environment that helps to stimulate vocabulary development, creativity, comprehension, and writing skills (Smith, 1998). The following are characteristics and benefits of whole language instruction:

1. Students read meaningful content rather than analyze words which may have no meaning for the reader.
2. Students attach interest to what is being read in a story rather than being drilled on phonics and syllabication skills.
3. Students learn to recognize words in context, not in isolation.
4. Students receive reinforcement in word recognitions through rereading and echoic reading of previously read content.
5. Students observe the teacher reading aloud, followed by cooperative reading with the teacher, and then reread the same subject matter, such as in using the Big Book in reading instruction (Ediger, 2001, p. 23).

Phonics instruction supports the belief that students need tools in learning to recognize unknown words. Students can use these tools to decode a word by looking at an initial consonant sound or dividing an unknown word into syllables. Phonics instruction provides security to learners in becoming independent in word identification and can also be used with whole word methods in reading instruction (Ediger, 2001).

Phonics instruction is based on phonemes in our language system and helps lead to phonemic awareness by students. The logic of phonics instruction is that letters can be coded as sounds and then blended to produce reading and writing. This will usually lead to invented spelling (Goodman, 1986).

Another type of literacy instruction is guided reading. Guided reading is part of a balanced literacy program providing several kinds of reading and writing. During a guided reading lesson a teacher works with a small group of children who are able to read similar levels of text with support. This literacy program promotes flexible grouping and the use of literacy centers. The ultimate goal in guided reading is to help students learn how to successfully use independent reading strategies (Fountas & Pinnell, 1996).

Shared reading can be part of a balanced literacy program. During shared reading teachers use a familiar text to help students engage in reading even before they can independently decode words. This supports the development of critical concepts about print. Children experience and enjoy literacy texts they are not yet able to read independently through shared reading (Button & Johnson, 1997).

Benefits of Instructing Reading in Kindergarten

Early childhood is an important time for children to begin reading and gain exposure to many types of literacy. Piaget's theories of child development support the use of children's literature with children during the early childhood years. His theory states that children between 2 and 7 years of age fit into the preoperational period of development believing that if inanimate objects move, they are alive. This makes children enjoy magic and fairy tales without questioning the logic of a story. During the years from 4 to 7, children learn to understand different perspectives from their own and change from being

self-centered to other-centered. Children will continue to read fantasy stories, but they will also read more realistic stories to develop their relationships with others, and they will learn more about other people and the world. Therefore this time is the most sensitive period for children to feel and taste children's literature because they have a lot of imagination and creativity to interpret stories and relate them to their lives (Yoo, 1997).

Nielsen and Monson's (1996) study reported that children in an emergent literacy kindergarten made significant gains over the course of the year. The study compared two distinctly different kindergarten literacy environments, and it revealed how the contexts for literacy learning affected the literacy development of 83 children. The elements that made the kindergartens different were the ways in which the two participating teachers structured the literacy environment and events: one considered a reading readiness classroom, the other an emergent literacy classroom. The teacher who taught the reading readiness kindergarten saw her job as getting the children ready for first grade and had an academic focus with the class being teacher directed. The emergent literacy teacher followed the guidelines of the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC) to incorporate an integrated curriculum that is child centered and honors what is known about cognitive, social, emotional, and physical development. She provided immersion in a variety of texts, demonstrations of how print works, expectations for success, opportunities to use language and print in a variety of situations, response from others, and opportunities to take responsibility through choice making.

Another longitudinal study found that schools which had a well-developed reading program in kindergarten produced long-term benefits for all students, particularly at-risk students (Center, Freeman, & Robertson, 1998). This article also acknowledged the

importance of the years from birth to five that lay the foundation for the linguistic and cognitive skills that underlie successful school experiences. Children that have had rich parental interactions and quality preschool programs will respond positively in kindergarten; however, many children have less satisfactory preschool experiences and less supportive homes which in turn may cause them more difficulties at the point of school entry. This fact supports the research findings that kindergartens with well-developed reading programs may be the turning point for these socially disadvantaged, or at-risk students.

Beach and Young's (1997) study examined a model for the development of children's emerging literacy resources in multiple kindergarten classroom environments. Results showed that language and print awareness had a direct effect on both simple phonemic awareness and knowledge of the alphabetic principle. Also, simple phonemic awareness and knowledge of the alphabetic principle influenced word identification. Simple phonemic awareness also affected knowledge of the alphabetic principle. The model used stressed using instructional activities that develop understanding about the purposes of print and the relationship of oral language to written language. The model suggests that kindergarten teachers demonstrate reading and writing skills using big books, interactive writing, and language experience charts. These activities help make explicit the connection between the spoken and written word, and support the relationship between reading and writing. The model also values the importance that language plays with young children using rhymes, poems, and songs that manipulate the sounds of words. It is important that students are given the opportunity to build on their conceptual knowledge about print by exploring its uses in multiple contexts, such as: using literacy in play,

writing using pictures and invented spelling in journals, using literacy for *real-life* purposes (lists, letters, and reminders), and reading multiple texts alone and with others (Beach & Young, 1997). By using this model the teacher is taking into account each child's individual progression on the path toward becoming a conventional reader and writer.

Neuman and Fischer's (1995) study examined a holistic approach to literacy instruction in kindergarten classes. The study looked at what was taught in literacy, how it was taught, and whether these structures were more developmentally appropriate than previous practices in literacy teaching for kindergartners. Activities that involved comprehension, reading to students, drawing pictures, and reading with students were most observed in lessons, making up over 61% of the total time observed in classrooms. The results showed that these classrooms, using a more holistic approach, engaged students in more meaning-based tasks than previous studies have reported. Little evidence was seen of ditto sheets and workbooks being used. The teachers engaged students in integrated activities using speaking, listening, reading, and writing. They also encouraged students to associate literature with enjoyment and created a sense of community while learning.

Specific benefits of shared reading include providing needed support for less able readers who enter school with limited exposure to books and print. Shared reading also offers a non-threatening and enjoyable way to strengthen the language and reading skills of struggling readers. It enables children to gain confidence in their ability to develop as readers and incorporates important experiences with different types of children's literature. This literature can demonstrate and clarify important concepts and understanding through stories that interest kindergarten children.

Problems Associated with Teaching Reading in Kindergarten

Not all children experience strong physical and social environments for learning; therefore, they will come to school with wide-ranging abilities (Bouas, Thompson, & Farlow, 1997). Teachers must make many adaptations for students of varying ability and this is more difficult when teaching reading in kindergarten. The age gap at which students enter kindergarten seems to be increasing. Many parents are waiting to send their children if they have a late birthday, yet some are sending their child when the child is barely five. This creates a classroom of young five year-olds to mature six year-olds with varying abilities. Among all of these maturity and age differences is the problem that all students are not ready to read at the same time, no matter what their age.

When all of the children are not ready to read at the same time, the problem occurs of whether or not to instruct reading and how to teach reading. There are so many different ways to teach reading that the process of beginning a reading program can be overwhelming to many teachers. It may be hard to organize the curriculum into the best way to start teaching reading, which can frustrate many teachers. Another issue to consider if some children are ready to read and some aren't, is how will you instruct those ready to read. Many teachers use grouping of some sort. This can lead to low self-efficacy and self-worth among the students that are not reading yet (Alderman, 1999).

Some kindergarten programs are only half-day and that makes it hard to find time to teach reading everyday. Teachers also need to support the reading program and not be limited to teaching reading with certain methods. Some teachers have taught reading the same way for years and are not enthusiastic about other approaches. They need to have an open mind to using a balanced approach that will ensure all students learn to their potential.

Teacher behavior is an important key to the success of any teaching approach (Kostelnik, Black, & Taylor, 1998). Besides teachers supporting the teaching of reading in kindergartens, there must be support from the administration and parents to help ensure the success of the reading program.

CHAPTER 3

GUIDELINES FOR IMPLEMENTING LITERACY INSTRUCTION IN KINDERGARTEN

Teachers are the critical element in promoting literacy in the kindergarten classroom. Kindergarten is the foundation of learning in schools. It is important for students to develop positive feelings about school and learning during their early years. It is beneficial for students to be a part of a well-developed reading program in kindergarten to foster their growth in following years.

Children's literature can help fulfill the purpose of developing young children's social, emotional, cognitive, linguistic, and physical skills. This encourages children to develop as a whole child through a variety of activities while developing their personality and learning during their early childhood education. Piaget's theories of child development support the use of children's literature with young children (Yoo, 1997). The following guidelines can be used for developing a literacy program.

1. Teachers should provide a literacy rich environment.

The classroom should be organized for literacy learning. Written language and materials for reading and writing are incorporated naturally and authentically whenever possible. The environment is filled with a variety of print, such as: books, magazines, charts of poems and songs, alphabet charts, labels, and messages. Students' writing can also be displayed as they progress through the year. It is also necessary to have a classroom library that is inviting for independent and partner reading. Books, poems, and songs can also be integrated into other subject areas such as math, science, and social

studies. By having this type of environment, students will be engaged in literacy activities throughout the day (Fountas & Pinnell, 1996).

The kindergarten classroom must feature accessible print that supports children's daily reading and writing. Materials and centers should be clearly labeled. The classroom library should have a variety of books with featured authors and books available in groupings according to categories. Children's work showcasing their writing should be displayed in the classroom. Teachers should also provide a word wall or word lists of words from recent studies and common sight words. By providing a literacy rich environment students will have resources and a support system to encourage their reading and writing (Dahl et al., 2001).

2. Teachers should use a balanced approach for teaching reading.

During the kindergarten year, children will typically learn to identify letters, make rapid progress in alliteration, and blending. Many children will be ready to learn how to read. The best way to do this is through a balanced approach. Whole language instruction can be integrated with both phonics and phonemic awareness to maximize children's overall progress (Smith, 1998).

Some of the critical dimensions in literacy development that are necessary in any kindergarten classroom are: **immersion** in real reading and writing, **demonstration** through the teacher's acts of literacy, and **support** by answering questions and encouraging children to read and write for themselves (Crafton, 1994).

Students should participate in whole-group, small-group, and individual activities that are related to reading and writing. The children will engage in activities carefully

designed and offered by their teacher to help them build and use their individual knowledge and strengths in literacy (Fountas & Pinnell, 1996).

It is important to remember that teachers should use a balanced approach of whole language instruction, phonics instruction, shared reading, group reading, independent reading, and guided reading. Each of these areas provides the students with necessary strategies needed for success in reading. Calkins (2001) pointed out that children need opportunities to actively construct a knowledge of phonics. Students should be taught, not only about a particular system (the alphabet), but also how they can explore this system. According to Dahl, Schrarer, Lawson, and Grogan (2001), phonics instruction is a key part of the beginning curriculum in reading and writing, but does not have to be a prerequisite. Many understandings about letters and sounds go hand-in-hand with progress in reading and writing. The challenge is to ensure students have the phonics knowledge and that phonics teaching relates developmentally to the reading and writing they are doing. Phonics instruction can occur in small groups and in whole group settings such as read alouds, shared reading, or interactive reading (Dahl et al., 2001). Shared reading also makes a unique contribution, offering a way teachers can use engaging texts and authentic literacy experiences, while helping children develop strategies to become independent readers (Button & Johnson, 1997). Opportunities should also be balanced with writing, offering the students shared writing and independent writing practice. Crafton (1994) stressed that there is not *one* single irrefutable factor that influences early reading which is the key to long-term development, but rather, there are multiple factors and strategies that should be used to provide students with a well-developed literacy program.

3. Teachers should support students learning to read at their own level.

Teachers should support students at whatever level they are reading, for students need to be reading at a developmentally appropriate level that is not too hard, nor too easy. Teachers can provide support through modeling beginning reading skills, such as tracking left to right, turning pages, and starting at the top of the page to read. Through shared reading teachers allow children to learn and participate at their own developmental levels without feeling threatened (Dahl et al., 2001).

Another way teachers support students reading is by reading aloud every day. Students should have opportunities to read aloud each day, but just as important, teachers should read aloud every day. As students progress through the grades and become better readers, they are able to completely engage themselves in a story and lose themselves in the drama of a story. However, some children will not be able to completely focus on the actual story, because they will be thinking instead, of how to pronounce words and how many pages are left to read. They will be wrapped up in how to read instead of the actual content. This is where teachers can provide some extra support by reading aloud to children and letting them completely focus on the story line (Calkins, 2001).

One of the most important ways for teachers to support students is through observations that acknowledge what the student is already doing.

Jerome Bruner describes the teacher's role as *scaffolding*; Michael Halliday speaks of it as *tracking*; L. S. Vygotsky talks about working in the child's *zone of proximal development*; and Marie Clay speaks of the importance of sensitive observation accompanying each stage of teaching. (Calkins, 2001, p. 11)

Each of these researchers uses a different metaphor suggesting that teachers give temporary support to help students achieve steps beyond what the students could do independently.

Vygotsky's quote emphasizes this type of support by stating:

What the child can do in cooperation today he can do alone tomorrow. Therefore the only good kind of instruction is that which marches ahead of development and leads it; it must be aimed not so much at the ripe as at the ripening functions. (Vygotsky, 1962, p. 104)

By giving this support teachers are successful in teaching a chief goal of literacy: independence to each child. If children remain dependent on teachers, they will not take charge and self-monitor their behaviors to progress as learners. Teachers need to encourage a child's newfound independence at each stage of growth in literacy (Booth, 1996).

It is important for teachers to focus on the abilities each child does have while supporting their reading levels. Some students will catch on to strategies rather quickly and may not need as much reinforcement in certain areas. Other students may struggle to put all of the pieces of reading together. Kindergarten students will come to school with wide-ranging abilities; however, every child is capable of doing something. The teacher's role is to recognize what each child can do and establish a positive, supportive environment that encourages growth (Bouas, Thompson, & Farlow, 1997).

CHAPTER 4

SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Summary

The intent of this study was to examine ways of teaching literacy in the kindergarten and to present guidelines for effectively implementing literacy instruction in the kindergarten. The paper addressed four questions to accomplish this purpose:

1. What are the different types of literacy instruction?

There are a variety of literacy instruction types to use in teaching kindergarten. The question of what types of instruction should be used and how it should be used has been debated for years. Two techniques for teaching children to read are whole language instruction and phonics instruction. Other types of literacy instruction include guided reading, shared reading, and teaching with an emphasis on phonemic awareness. These types of instruction can be taught in whole-group, small-group, and individual settings.

2. What are the benefits of instructing reading in kindergarten?

Kindergarten is a critical time for students to be exposed to literacy. The students have an enthusiasm for books, reading, and writing that is hard to recreate in later years. Children's imagination is never-ending and should be fully tapped during kindergarten. Nielsen and Monson's (1996) study concluded that students that were taught in an emergent literacy kindergarten that is child centered made significant gains during a school year. Center, Freeman, and Robertson (1998) determined that at-risk students can show rapid growth from attending a kindergarten with a well-developed reading program.

Another study showed that teachers need to focus on each child's individual progression and provide multiple ways of teaching literacy (Beach & Young, 1997).

The literary heritage of our culture can provide children with many advantages. By exposing young children to literature we are developing their appreciation for language through learning a sense of story and creating their own stories from listening to stories, reading books, and sharing meaning. If teachers stress the importance of children's literature, children will become good readers and writers the rest of their lives, reading with pleasure and excitement (Yoo, 1997).

3. What are the problems associated with teaching reading in kindergarten?

Along with benefits of teaching reading in kindergarten, come some problems associated with instructing reading. Teachers need to consider the needs of all of the students and adapt to their different ways of learning to read. More than likely, all students in kindergarten will not be ready to read at the same time; therefore, teachers need to adjust their teaching to include all of the students' abilities. Just as important, teachers need the knowledge and skills to guide the students when teaching literacy.

4. What are the guidelines for teachers implementing literacy instruction in kindergarten?

This study determined that teachers need a set of guidelines to follow for implementing literacy instruction in kindergarten. Teachers must provide a literacy rich environment that gives children daily opportunities to explore language in a variety of contexts (Bouas, Thompson, & Farlow, 1997). It is important to use a balanced approach that uses a variety of instructional methods. In addition to these guidelines, teachers should

support students learning to read at their own level. It is important for students to feel successful as they are learning to read and to be very involved in the literacy program. Teachers need to support the role of kindergarten, which is to build upon literacy understanding that the child brings with him or her to formal schooling and to provide numerous opportunities for the child to engage in books, writing, and play experiences. These experiences should also include the adult or more literate peers modeling aspects of language and print and providing support for the students to progress from one level of understanding to the next (Nielsen & Monson, 1996).

Conclusions

The following conclusions were determined from this study:

1. Children's literature provides many opportunities for children to read and respond during their literacy development.
2. Exposing children to books frequently at a young age is a very effective way to develop literacy.
3. A learning environment that is rich with literature and print supports beginning readers.
4. Teachers can instruct reading in kindergarten using a balanced approach.
5. Kindergarten students need individual and group support when beginning to read.

Recommendations

1. Kindergarten teachers should provide a classroom environment that encourages beginning readers.
2. Kindergarten teachers should use a balanced approach, incorporating a variety of teaching methods to instruct reading.

3. Educators in kindergarten must support students learning to read at their own individual levels.
4. Teachers need to have current knowledge of literacy development and support changes in teaching reading.
5. Further research should be continued to understand the skills needed to teach beginning readers and the approaches that work best.

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