

Course: Foundations of Reading (8634)

Semester: Spring, 2021

ASSIGNMENT No.1

Q.1 First five years of a child's life are very important with reference to his language development.

Discuss.

Gaining of knowledge - in my opinion, this is an indisputable argument in favor of reading books - I mean not only school and academic books, but also all kinds of literature. It doesn't matter if you read fantasy, detective stories, adventure books or personal development items. You always learn something. And this is a new thing, a new object, a new place, a new person that until now you had no idea. Each book brings something fresh to your knowledge. A funny example can be here, for example, Harry Potter, which is dotted with words created for his needs, but testifying to the fact that you can also equip yourself with the knowledge that does not necessarily translate into reality, e.g. Horcruxes, posterior explosions, dementors. Who knows, maybe this is how words learned will inspire you to write a book,

Vocabulary broadening - this advantage connects directly to the previously mentioned. By gaining new knowledge, you automatically expand your vocabulary - so reading every day you have the chance to immediately expand your resource of used words. The use of more advanced vocabulary can be a great help even when applying for jobs that require it. In addition, self-confidence increases significantly - you are no longer afraid to talk to people using sophisticated vocabulary.

Improving memory and brain - it can not be otherwise. By reading, you make your brain function improve, new nerve connections are created, those already created become stronger, and your memory develops with new threads and characters or new issues. One can say that books are such fuel for the brain. Just as a car cannot drive without fuel, the brain cannot function properly without absorbing new information. Do not let him stand in the middle of nowhere, from which he cannot get out, because the tank is empty.

The development of analytical thinking is possible thanks to reading books. So if you have a problem with it, the solution seems obvious. You can improve this skill by doing a simple exercise while reading - if you're reading a crime story, for example, try to predict who the criminal is or what the whole story will be based on. Play detective, and surely your brain will be happy with it. In addition, you can also play the role of a critic - evaluate whether the character was well written by the author, or if his story is consistent. Finally, talk about the book with people who have also read it - you will have the opportunity to express your opinions and discuss them with others.

Concentration and focus - in today's crazy Internet age, human attention is directed to thousands of directions simultaneously and multi-tasking, i.e. multitasking, accompanies us every day. Do you know a situation in which at the same time you check your e-mail, answer the phone, the second one rings, customers come into the office and you take a look at Facebook in the meantime? At some point, it can cause your mind to rebel, and your concentration drops sharply. So you have to give yourself all these external impulses and exercise to keep your mental function for many years. Reading, all your attention is (or at least should be!) Focused on history,

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you get the impression that the whole world is disappearing at that time. This condition is great for later efficiency, e.g. at work or while studying.

The ability to write better appears with the increase in vocabulary, which, as I wrote earlier, results from frequent reading. Observation, maybe not quite aware, of the writing style of different authors can positively affect your own way of transferring thoughts to paper. In addition, remember that just as a musician is inspired by the achievements of his predecessors or a painter draws on the works of previous eras, so do writers find inspiration in reading items written by other authors. Do you want to write better? - do not avoid books, a simple conclusion :)

The ability to set goals can easily be shaped by reading books. It is probably best to explain this in school reading, which has a set date for discussion. If the student sets small goals, which are the number of pages read daily, it will be easier for him to reach the end of the book on time. You can later translate this action to other aspects of life - to work, personal life, or the realization of your dreams. What to do if you did not have this skill in childhood? You can also use books :) - read Brian Tracy and you will certainly learn how to set goals correctly. I also wrote about it on the blog.

If you want your child to be empathic, to empathize - read books with him, and then let him find appropriate instinctive positions for himself. It is easiest for children to explain this strange word on a specific example, and yet they are most interested in fairy tales and novels for the youngest. You, a teenager or an adult can also learn something new about your empathy - in many books there are topics that are supposed to touch even the most hardened hearts. Sometimes you can give up and feel like a child who is just learning new things.

Relaxation and stress reduction - yes, on gloomy winter days, there are not many better things than a good book that can calm down intrusive thoughts and completely disconnect from reality. It remains only to plunge into the world of heroes, their adventures, and fate - after a good dose of reading I feel as relaxed as after a pilates or a walk. In addition, reading can reduce the stress that you accumulate throughout the workweek. If you are not quite convinced to read every day, although during the weekend find time for it. I am convinced that after several such sessions, stress will decrease and you will have more strength and inclination to act.

Fun and entertainment free. Well, how is that? - books are bought. It's true, but you don't always have to. I'm sure there is at least one library in your area from which you can borrow different books. Maybe you won't find rare titles there and not always all items are available, but there are also pearls. It is therefore worth checking where you can borrow books and if you do not want to buy them, use this form. You can also find hundreds of free e-books on the Internet - just enter the phrase in the search engine and it's ready! In addition, as I mentioned, in every major city there are several and sometimes over a dozen bookstores that offer cheap books - sometimes prices are very cheap. , for example, I have in my collection - they are not damaged or made in hopeless quality, they are simply cheap. If you like, also use book exchanges - they are organized periodically,

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e.g. in Krakow. You give back the ones you have already read and get new ones. And what? - I convinced you that reading is free entertainment? :)

Library, bookstore, and online shelves have genres literally for everyone and anything you like - whether it is classical literature, poetry, fashion magazines, biographies, religious texts, books for children and young people, guidebooks, maps, romances or something else - in each of these positions is hidden something that will take you to the world of curiosity and imagination. So leave the computer at the moment, open the book and start reading it :) And then come back to share your experience with me!

3 main purpose of reading

reading for survival

- reading to gain important information for one survival
- to response appropriately to environment

reading for learning

- academically incline
- goal oriented
- to improve vocab, ect

reading for pleasure

- fiction genre, for fun
- indirect learning

The purpose of reading is to connect the ideas on the page to what you already know. If you don't know anything about a subject, then pouring words of text into your mind is like pouring water into your hand.

Q.2 Discuss different phases of a child's physical development.

1. NEWBORN

During the first month of life, newborns exhibit automatic responses to external stimuli. In other words, a newborn will turn her head toward your hand when you stroke her cheek or grab your finger when you place it in her hand. A newborn is able to see close-up objects, recognize certain smells, smile or cry to indicate a need, and move her head from side to side.

Newborns may show signs developmental disabilities, such as spina bifida, genetic disorders and fetal alcohol syndrome.

2. INFANT

Infants develop new abilities quickly in the first year of life. At three to six months, an infant can control his head movements and bring his hands together. By six to nine months old, an infant can sit without support, babble and respond to his name. Between nine and twelve months old, a baby can pick up objects, crawl and even stand with support.

Slow development in infants may be signs of Down's syndrome and other developmental disabilities.

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3. TODDLER

As children reach the ages between one and three years, toddlers learn to walk without help, climb stairs and jump in place. They can hold a crayon, draw a circle, stack one block on top of another, use short sentences and even follow simple instructions.

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) recommends screening for autism at 18 to 24 months, or whenever a parent or health care professional has a concern.

4. PRESCHOOL

Between the ages of three and five years, children refine their motor skills. They can throw a ball overhand, skip and hop, stand on one foot for ten seconds or longer, dress themselves, and draw a person with features.

Signs of developmental disabilities, such as cerebral palsy, may appear during this stage of development.

5. SCHOOL AGE

School age children are six to 12 years old. They are capable, confident, independent and responsible. Peer relationships, particularly relationships with friends of the same gender, are important to school age children. The older school age child begins to develop sexual characteristics.

Signs of ADHD, such as trouble staying focused and being easily distracted, may appear in school age children. If you worry that your child is falling behind, contact RISE, innovative human services network originally established in 1987. RISE offers a variety of helpful services for people with disabilities, including day programs, employment assistance, managed care, residential settings, and home and community based services. The developmental specialists at RISE provide early intervention services, such as occupational therapy, speech therapy, physical therapy for children with developmental disabilities.

Q.3 Reading skills improve slowly and gradually. Discuss it with reference to changing milestones with increase in age.

Reading ability is determined by many factors, and requires the development of certain skills through early reading instruction to attain initial success and build on it.

Adequate initial reading instruction requires that children:

- use reading to obtain meaning from print
- have frequent and intensive opportunities to read
- be exposed to frequent, regular spelling-sound relationships
- learn about the nature of the alphabetic writing system
- understand the structure of spoken words

Adequate progress in learning to read English (or any alphabetic language) beyond the initial level depends on:

- having a working understanding of how sounds are represented alphabetically
- sufficient practice in reading to achieve fluency with different kinds of texts

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- sufficient background knowledge and vocabulary to render written texts meaningful and interesting
- control over procedures for monitoring comprehension and repairing misunderstandings
- continued interest and motivation to read for a variety of purposes

Reading skill is acquired in a relatively predictable way by children who have normal or above-average language skills; have had experiences in early childhood that fostered motivation and provided exposure to literacy in use; get information about the nature of print through opportunities to learn letters and to recognize the internal structure of spoken words, as well as explanations about the contrasting nature of spoken and written language; and attend schools that provide effective reading instruction and opportunities to practice reading.

Disruption of any of these developments increases the possibility that reading will be delayed or impeded. The association of poor reading outcomes with poverty and minority status no doubt reflects the accumulated effects of several of these risk factors, including lack of access to literacy-stimulating preschool experiences and to excellent, coherent reading instruction.

In addition, a number of children without any obvious risk factors also develop reading difficulties. These children may require intensive efforts at intervention and extra help in reading and accommodations for their disability throughout their lives.

METHOD FOR THOROUGH STUDY

- Step 1: Survey
- Skim through the book and read topical/sub-topical headings and sentences. Read summaries at the end of chapters and books. Try to anticipate what the author is going to say. Write these notes on paper, then look it over to get an overall idea.
- Step 2: Questions
- Turn paragraph headings into questions (e.g. “Basic Concepts of Reading” to “What are the Basic Concepts of Reading?”). Write these questions out.
- Step 3: Read
- Read with alertness to answer the questions you came up with. Write notes, in your own words, under each question.
- Step 4: Recall
- Without looking at your books or notes, mentally visualize, in your own words, the high points of the material immediately upon completing the reading
- ** More time should be spent on recall than reading
- Step 5: Review
- Look at your questions, answers, notes and book to see how well you did recall. Finish up with a mental picture of the WHOLE

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Steps to Follow in Skimming for the Main Ideas

- Read the title of the selection carefully. Determine what clues it gives you as to what the selection is about. Watch for key words like “causes,” “results,” “effects,” etc., and do not overlook signal words such as those suggesting controversy (“versus”, “pros and cons”), which indicate that the author is planning to present both sides of an argument.
- Look carefully at the headings and other organizational clues. These tip you off to the main points that the author wants you to learn. You may be accustomed to overlooking boldface headings and titles which are the obvious clues to the most important ideas

VARY YOUR READING RATE

A few broad suggestions may help you to select your rate(s) within the particular article:

Decrease speed when you find the following:

1. An unfamiliar word not made clear by the sentence. Try to understand it from the way it's used; then read on and return to it later.
2. Long and uninvolved sentence and paragraph structure. Slow down enough to enable you to untangle them and get an accurate idea of what the passage says.
3. Unfamiliar or abstract ideas. Look for applications or examples which will give them meaning. Demand that an idea "make sense." Never give up until you understand, because it will be that much easier the next time. Find someone to help you if necessary.
4. Detailed, technical material. This includes complicated directions, abstract principles, materials on which you have scant background.
5. Material on which you want detailed retention. The key to memory is organization and recitation. Speed should not be a consideration here.

Increase speed when you find the following:

1. Simple material with few ideas new to you. Move rapidly over the familiar.
2. Unnecessary examples and illustrations. These are included to clarify ideas. If not needed, move over them rapidly.
3. Detailed explanation and elaboration which you do not need.
4. Broad, generalized ideas. These can be rapidly grasped, even with scan techniques

Skip that material which is not suitable for your purpose. While the author may have thought particular information was relevant, his/her reason for writing was not necessarily the same as your reason for reading. Remember to keep your reading attack flexible.

Shift gears from selection to selection. Use low gear when the going is steep; shift into high when you get to the smooth parts. Remember to adjust your rate within a given article according to the type of road you are

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traveling and to your purposes in traveling it. Most important, remember: You must practice these techniques until a flexible reading rate becomes second nature to you

THE PIVOTAL WORDS

No words are as helpful while reading as the prepositions and conjunctions that guide your mind along the pathways of the author's ideas. Master these words and phrases and you will almost immediately become a better reader. Here's what they are and what they say:

- **Additive words:** "Here's more of the same coming up. It's just as important as what we have already said."
- Also, further, moreover, and, furthermore, too, besides, in addition
- **Equivalent words:** "It does what I have just said, but it does this too."
- As well as, at the same time, similarly, equally important, likewise
- **Amplification words:** "I want to be sure that you understand my idea; so here's a specific instance."
- For example (e.g.), specifically, as, for instance, such as, like
- **Alternative words:** "Sometimes there is a choice; other times there isn't."
- Either/or, other than, neither/nor, otherwise
- **Repetitive words:** "I said it once, but I'm going to say it again in case you missed it the first time."
- Again, in other words, to repeat, that is (i.e.)
- **Contrast and Change words:** "So far I've given you only one side of the story; now let's take a look at the other side."
- But, on the contrary, still, conversely, on the other hand, though, despite, instead of, yet, however, rather than, regardless, nevertheless, even though, whereas, in spite of, notwithstanding
- **Cause and effect words:** "All this has happened; now I'll tell you why."
- Accordingly, since, then, because, so, thus, consequently, hence, therefore, for this reason
- **Qualifying words:** "Here is what we can expect. These are the conditions we are working under."
- If, although, unless, providing, whenever
- **Concession words:** "Okay! We agree on this much."
- accepting the data, granted that, of course
- **Emphasizing words:** "Wake up and take notice!"
- above all, more important, indeed
- **Order words:** "You keep your mind on reading: I'll keep the numbers straight."
- Finally, second, then, first, next, last
- **Time words:** "Let's keep the record straight on who said what and especially when."
- Afterwards, meanwhile, now, before, subsequently, presently, formerly, ultimately, previously, later
- **Summarizing words:** "We've said many things so far. Let's stop here and pull them together."
- for these reasons, in brief, in conclusion, to sum up

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DIGITAL RESOURCES

1. Spritz is an app that claims to increase reading speed and focus by adjusting word position and color use.
2. ZapReader is a free online program designed for speed reading by allowing the user to cut and paste text to be read into a box that will show the text one word at a time. However, since the rate of the word presentation can be adjusted by the user, this tool can be helpful for readers who benefit from having words shown individually for spacing/ reduced visual stimulation interface.
3. Spreeder is a free online program designed for speed reading by allowing the user to cut and paste text to be read into a box that will show the text one word at a time. However, since the rate of the word presentation can be adjusted by the user, this tool can be helpful for readers who benefit from having words shown individually for spacing/ reduced visual stimulation interface.
4. Beeline Reader is an online program that can help make reading faster and/or easier by using a color gradient that guides your eyes from the end of one line to the beginning of the next.
5. Rewordify.com is a free, online software that simplifies complex vocabulary into simpler vocabulary and thus might create "bite sized" snippets of dense reading content for previewing purposes.
6. Text Compactor: "Text Compactor is a free online summarization tool was created to help struggling readers process overwhelming amounts of information. However, the general approach will help any busy student, teacher, or professional."

Q.4 Students' learning is not solely based on one approach of learning, rather all approaches are combined as per need. Discuss.

The world has changed profoundly over the last two decades, and many of our longstanding notions about literacy need to be challenged. As a result, the definition of literacy is neither a singular or universal one, and it is often defined in contradictory ways. It is recognised that the teaching and learning of literacy is a major responsibility of the schools. While some children have some knowledge of literacy acquired before formal schooling, all will need the opportunities for learning to read and write that school provides. The term 'literacy' has often been associated with the reading and writing stage of learning and it is no surprise that the way the community views how literacy is learned in schools can take vastly different viewpoints. It is important to note that the way in which it is defined will shape the kinds of policies and approaches to teaching and learning that are adopted by the field of education. Olson's definition focuses on literacy as a 'cognitive' model, which is needed for work, education and social interaction. This view prevails that literacy is a simple, learned cognitive skill that one learns to read and write just as one learns to kick a ball, ride a bicycle or make a cake. It is clearly perceived, once the skill has been mastered. Street (1985) refers this view of literacy as the 'autonomous literacy' where those who master this skill can use it to advantage of influence and prestige.

In contrast, Street contemplates that literacy should have a more 'social' focus, such as the assumption of it contributing knowledge according to social-cultural contexts. He defines this alternative notion as 'ideological

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literacy’ which refers to the social conceptions and uses of literacy. This viewpoint suggests that literacy is an aspect of defining framework of society. Street (1997) extends this notion by arguing that literacy not only varies with social context and with cultural norms and discourses, but that its uses and meanings are embedded in relations of power. This suggests that literacy is what society achieves, and society is, to some extent, what literacy contributes to it.

Furthermore, another view of literacy is that of ‘critical literacy’ that is informed by the work of Paulo Freire (1972), who conceptualizes literacy not as reading the word but as ‘reading the world’. This advocates the emphasis of the empowering role that literacy can and should play in reshaping the way in which one lives and works. Wallace (2001) explains that the ‘empowering potential of literacy’ is articulated in difference ways to encourage new literates to use literacy as a means for educational change and for the literate person to reflect on what is wrong in their world and use the enabling power of literacy to change that world.

Furthermore, Wallace views this potential as a means to reshape approaches to English language teaching, not just for first language learners, but for the majority of users of English who are second language English speakers. She proposes that the variety of labels given to English in its worldwide role be replaced by what she calls ‘literate English’, one with which it is not a reduced or simplified model of English which restricts communication to basic patterns of interaction, but a ‘global English’ that should be elaborated to serve global needs. Luke and Carrington (2002) discuss this further with the notion of ‘literacy as cultural capital’ by suggesting how to construct a literacy education that addresses new economic and cultural formations providing our students with the ability to think critically and globally in a world that, increasingly, will require a politically and socially active citizen (NOTE, 2007).

In the minds of many in the community, an important function of schooling is that it teaches literacy with the teaching of literacy this is often held to be the most important thing that schooling provides. As a result, literacy remains high on the educational and political agenda at national and international levels and continues to be contested and debated. There appears to be three main models of literacy which have implications for policy-making, teaching and learning; autonomous, social and critical literacy.

The first is the ‘cognitive’ or ‘autonomous’ model, which has dominated educational policy for the last two decades especially in the UK with the introduction of the National Curriculum which then was preceded by the National Literacy Strategy (NLS) in the late 90s. Both of which attempted to ‘transform’ literacy teaching in the primary and secondary school. Goodwyn and Findlay (2003) are encouraged by the aim of the NLS to demystify subject teaching and to involve all subject specialist in helping pupils become literate within each subject. However, the emphasis on the ‘autonomous’ literacy model is a failure to acknowledge the ever changing nature of literacy. This skills-based view of a universal or aptitude represents the meaning of literacy in terms of limited mental operations. Therefore, if we view literacy teaching and learning as a matter of mastering certain important, but essentially basic technical skills in control of such things as the spelling and

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writing system, and perhaps how to shape simple written sentences. Literacy becomes a relatively simple and unproblematic matter, learned in the early years and then used and reused in whatever ways appear appropriate. According to Street (1995), such traditional definitions of literacy are based on an “autonomous model,” autonomous because it is extracted from its social, cultural, and historical context. When treated as a technical skill or mental operation independent of social context, literacy is associated with consequences that have no relation to the social situations in which it is embedded. In addition, Street (1995) explains, it gives limited attention to social structures within which the concepts and specific cultures are formed. Therefore, in an autonomous model, literacy is separated from its social context and considered an independent variable making it possible to associate literacy with symbolic elements such as progress, social mobility and economic stability (Gee, 1996). In our society, the benefits for being literate has taken on mythic qualities as Street suggests this ‘literacy myth’ raises false expectations for those who do become literate in comparison to the ‘illiterate’ who are branded as too lazy or, even worse unable to learn. This situation enables government to shift focus away from social problems onto individual shortcomings (Street, 1996)

The second model of literacy is one that avoids the pitfalls of the literacy myth by capturing the complexity of literacy practices in the social contexts that make them meaningful. Street (1996) calls this an ‘ideological model of literacy’, which concentrates on the social practices of reading and writing and the ideological and culturally embedded nature of these practices. In addition, the ideological model maintains a wariness of claims for literacy and distinguishes between these claims and the actual significance of literacy for the people involved. Literacy in the ideological model looks beyond a technical definition of literacy to consider ‘literacy practices.’ Rather than limiting literacy to events that involve reading and writing, Street broadens the scope to ‘literacy practices’ which take into account ‘the behaviour and the social and cultural conceptualizations that give meaning to the uses of reading and writing.’ This concept of literacy practices gets us away from the literacy myth by re-inserting social and cultural context and arguing that whatever benefits come from literacy also come from the contexts in which it is embedded.

Our academic experts are ready and waiting to assist with any writing project you may have. From simple essay plans, through to full dissertations, you can guarantee we have a service perfectly matched to your needs. The third model ‘critical literacy’ is one that as Wallace (2001) explains ‘is powerful to the extent that it offers a vantage point from which to survey other literacies.’ Like the ideological model, critical literacy is understood as social action through language use that develops us as agents inside a larger culture. However, it takes us beyond this in providing an active, challenging approach to reading and textual practice by the analysis and critique of the relationship among texts, language, power, social groups and social practice. It shows us ways of looking at written, visual, spoken, multimedia and performance texts to question and challenge the attitudes, values and beliefs that lie beneath the surface. It has been suggested that critical literacy links with our modern lifestyles of a rapidly changing globalised world. Changing societal structures, increasing social and cultural

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diversity and the marketing of ideas and products through multimedia mean that we need to think about literacy for lifelong learning in new ways. The way that information is received today hadn't been invented twenty years ago. The world is becoming increasingly accessible because of instantaneous communications; the corpus of print literature is expanding almost exponentially because of the number of works either being written in English not just by authors from United States or the British Commonwealth but by major authors outside these regions. The consequence is that the technology is not only bringing 'global English' (Wallace, 2004) into daily contact, the nature of digital communication is aiding in the demise of a 'standard English'. Instant messaging, text messaging, and other technological forms of communication are creating new writing practices that often undermine traditional, standard English for the sake of faster, more effective communication. English is becoming more complex than ever, and our students will need to be flexible and efficient users of a vast array of discourses that isolated, drill-oriented grammar lessons simply will not teach. We need to be able to make meaning from the array of multimedia, complex visual imagery, music and sound, even virtual worlds that confront us each day in addition to written and spoken words. Changes in society are occurring so rapidly that we need to take time to think about whether they will have positive or negative effects upon our ways of living. Lonsdale et al (2004) imply that the meaning of literacy has changed over time from an elementary 'decoding' of words to a range of more complex and diverse skills and understandings. There is a need for these changes to be understood, against a background of economic, social, political and cultural. Literacy as a 'social practice' should be considered in context, rather than the convention of literacy as an individual, cognitive skill. The new skills are premised on the idea that much higher order skills such as critical thinking are now needed by all students. Goodwyn et al (2003) suggest that students once needed literacy to be told what to do; now they need it to know what to do without being told.

Street (1985) implies that Ideological literacy requires that we view literacy as much more than the ability to decipher or encode messages on paper. We have to view literacy in the dynamic contexts of politics, social change, development, education, religion, philosophy, confrontation, and even war. Practitioners of critical literacy have forcefully made the point that literacy is a mechanism of political control as well as a tool for liberation. These views of literacy are not mutually exclusive. Rather, they represent points on a continuum between "action" and "system." At one extreme, autonomous literacy is viewed as something isolated from everything else, as a personal skill or characteristic. At the other extreme, it is seen almost as a primal element in the construction of reality. (SIL, 1999)

The teaching of critical thinking plays a central role in the teaching of critical literacy. As the world becomes more complex, increasingly flattened, and, one might argue, ever more interesting and challenging, our students must be prepared to enter it as competent, thoughtful, and agentive readers and communicators. In order to prepare them effectively, we as literacy educators must make changes to literacy curricula that traditionally view knowledge making and communication as straightforward, text-based, and individualized, a perspective

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that was only appropriate before the recent explosion in communicative technologies and resulting economic, social, and cultural realities. To prepare students who can be active and effective world citizens able to make thoughtful decisions and solve global problems, we must first help them to be critical, meta-aware thinkers and communicators. (NOTE, 2007)

‘A consequence of these views of literacy has been that specialists in the field have become more aware that literacy, in both theory and practice, is more than a simple technical skill. Literacy, by itself, does not lead to health, wealth, happiness, and national development. Literacy is but one element in the development process. The other elements must be included if developmental aspirations are to be attained.’ (SIL, 1999)

The world has changed profoundly over the last two decades, and many of our longstanding notions about literacy need to be challenged. As a result, the definition of literacy is neither a singular or universal one, and it is often defined in contradictory ways. It is recognised that the teaching and learning of literacy is a major responsibility of the schools. While some children have some knowledge of literacy acquired before formal schooling, all will need the opportunities for learning to read and write that school provides. The term ‘literacy’ has often been associated with the reading and writing stage of learning and it is no surprise that the way the community views how literacy is learned in schools can take vastly different viewpoints. It is important to note that the way in which it is defined will shape the kinds of policies and approaches to teaching and learning that are adopted by the field of education.

Olson’s definition focuses on literacy as a ‘cognitive’ model, which is needed for work, education and social interaction. This view prevails that literacy is a simple, learned cognitive skill that one learns to read and write just as one learns to kick a ball, ride a bicycle or make a cake. It is clearly perceived, once the skill has been mastered. Street (1985) refers this view of literacy as the ‘autonomous literacy’ where those who master this skill can use it to advantage of influence and prestige.

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encourage new literates to use literacy as a means for educational change and for the literate person to reflect on what is wrong in their world and use the enabling power of literacy to change that world.

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Q.5 Positive climate and better physical environment play an important role in supporting learning of early graders. Elaborate with examples.

As early childhood education moves front and center in the public policy debate, more attention is being paid to early literacy. Early childhood professionals have long recognized the importance of language and literacy in preparing children to succeed in school. Early literacy plays a key role in enabling the kind of early learning experiences that research shows are linked with academic achievement, reduced grade retention, higher graduation rates and enhanced productivity in adult life. This report synthesizes the body of professional knowledge about early literacy and offers research-based recommendations.

What we know:

- Literacy development starts early in life and is highly correlated with school achievement.
- All of the domains of a child's development —physical, social-emotional, cognitive, language and literacy—are interrelated and interdependent.
- The more limited a child's experiences with language and literacy the more likely he or she will have difficulty learning to read.
- Key early literacy predictors of reading and school success include oral language, Alphabetic Code, and print knowledge.
- Well-conceived standards for child outcomes, curriculum content, and teacher preparation help establish clarity of purpose and a shared vision for early literacy education.
- Increased demands for program accountability are often heavily focused on assessments of children's early literacy development.
- Highly capable teachers are required to implement today's more challenging early literacy curriculum.
- Teacher knowledge, respect and support for the diversity of children's families, cultures, and linguistic backgrounds are important in early literacy development.

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Policy recommendations:

- All children should have access to early childhood programs with strong literacy components that include clear adaptations for children with special needs.
- Early literacy curricula and teaching practices should be evidence-based, integrated with all domains of learning, and understandable to staff members.
- Early literacy standards should be established that articulate with K-12 programs and reflect consistency and continuity with overall program goals.
- Early literacy assessment should use multiple methods and use the information to improve both teaching and the total preschool program.
- Standards for early childhood professionals should require staff to meet early literacy instructional standards.
- Parent involvement programs should have a strong early literacy component that guides parents and caregivers in providing early literacy experiences at home.
- Support for English Language Learners should be specified and provided in both the home language and English where feasible.

A growing body of evidence shows that early learning experiences are linked with later school achievement, emotional and social well-being, fewer grade retentions, and reduced incidences of juvenile delinquency and that these outcomes are all factors associated with later adult productivity.¹ Other research has identified key predictors for reading and school success.

An analysis of the research literature indicates specific skills and abilities of children ages birth through 5 years that predict later reading outcomes.

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Key predictive skills and abilities include:

- **Oral language**
listening comprehension, oral language vocabulary
- **Alphabetic Code**
alphabet knowledge, phonological/ phonemic awareness (the ability to discriminate sounds in words), invented spelling
- **Print Knowledge/Concepts**
environmental print, concepts about print

Other less significant indicators include: Rapid Automatic Naming (RAN); visual memory; and visual perceptual abilities.

How young children acquire early literacy and its oral language foundation has gained the attention of educators and policymakers. Research establishes four major principles of early literacy acquisition:

Oral language is the foundation for literacy development.

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Oral language provides children with a sense of words and sentences and builds sensitivity to the sound system so that children can acquire phonological awareness and phonics. Through their own speech children demonstrate their understanding of the meanings of words and written materials.

Supporting evidence

- Children reared in families where parents provide rich language and literacy support do better in school than those who do not. Languagepoor families are likely to use fewer different words in their everyday conversations and the language environment is more likely to be controlling and punitive.³
- Exposure to less common, more sophisticated vocabulary (rare words) at home relates directly to children's vocabulary acquisition. Rare words are those that go beyond the typical 8,500 most common words in the English language.⁴
- There is a strong relationship between vocabulary development and reading achievement. Understanding the meanings of words is critical to understanding what a child reads. Good readers combine a variety of strategies to read words. Even when children have strong familiarity with the alphabetic code, they frequently meet words for which the pronunciation is not easily predictable.

Children who acquire strong vocabularies increase their ability to make sense of what a word might be while using what they know about phonics.⁵

Children's experiences with the world greatly influence their ability to comprehend what they read.

Reading involves comprehending written texts. What children bring to a text influences the understandings they take away and the use they make of what is read.

Supporting evidence

- Background knowledge about the world is built from a child's experiences.
- The more limited a child's experiences the more likely he or she will have difficulty comprehending what is read.

Learning to read and write starts long before first grade and has long-lasting effects.

Learning to read and write is an ongoing process from infancy. Contrary to popular belief, it does not suddenly begin in kindergarten or first grade. From the earliest years, everything that adults do to support children's language and literacy is critical.

Supporting evidence

- Language and literacy develop concurrently and influence one another. What children learn from listening and talking contributes to their ability to read and write and vice versa. For example, young children's phonological awareness (ability to identify and make oral rhymes, identify and work with syllables in spoken words, and the ability to hear, identify, and manipulate the individual sounds— phonemes—in spoken words) is an important indicator of their potential success in learning to decode print. Early vocabulary development is an important predictor of success in reading comprehension. Both phonological awareness and vocabulary development

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begin early with participation in rhyming games and chants, shared book experiences, and extended conversations with adults.⁶

- Children who fall behind in oral language and literacy development in the years before formal schooling are less likely to be successful beginning readers; and their achievement lag is likely to persist throughout the primary grades and beyond.⁷
- Responsive adults have a special role in supporting children's ongoing, self-generated learning. Instructional support that relies on the accumulation of isolated skills is not sufficient. Teaching children to apply their knowledge and skills in meaningful situations has a significantly greater effect on their ability to learn to read.⁸ Children's experiences with books and print greatly influence their ability to comprehend what they read.⁹ Reading with adults, looking at books independently, and sharing reading experiences with peers are some of the ways that children experience books.

Supporting evidence

- Knowledge about print is built from children's experiences with books and other written materials.
- Shared book reading experiences have a special role in fostering early literacy development by building background knowledge about the world and concepts about books and print.¹⁰

Although the abundance of research evidence supports the need for attention to early literacy and its oral language foundations, it also raises essential questions about how early childhood programs can foster the skills and abilities young children need to become successful readers and writers and how reading difficulties can be prevented. The answers to these essential questions involve consideration of the following five important and related issues:

1. early literacy learning standards
2. curriculum
3. accountability and assessment
4. teacher education and professional development
5. home-school connections

Those charged with the responsibility for early childhood education must carefully consider each of these issues.

Issue 1: Developing and using early literacy learning standards

The growing trend to generate standards for early childhood education may be the best indication of a felt need to specify curriculum content and child outcomes for early education programs. Kendall and Marzano offer at least three principal reasons for the development and use of standards: to establish clarity of curriculum content, to raise expectations for the achievement of all children, and to ensure accountability for public education.¹¹ It has only been in recent years, however, that the field of early education has been a part of the standards movement.¹²

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One national effort to produce early language and literacy standards is the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC) Accreditation Performance Criteria for early childhood programs. These standards provide guidelines for the content that children are learning, the planned activities linked to these goals, the daily schedule and routines and the availability and use of materials for children.

Because oral language and literacy are so highly interrelated, the National Center on Education and the Economy produced a comprehensive standards document on speaking and listening for preschool through third grade to accompany a previously published document that only focused on standards for reading and writing.¹³

Each topic is described in terms of real life settings with implications for instruction and applications to different cultures and linguistic settings. In addition to national efforts, individual states have embraced the standards movement. In 2005, 43 states report having early childhood standards, which is a substantial increase over the past few years.¹⁴ Specifically, the standards include oral language development, phonological awareness, print knowledge and use, and writing. Many of them also specify criteria for teaching and program structure.

It is critical to develop standards wisely and with caution. In a joint policy statement on early learning standards NAEYC and the National Association of Early Childhood Specialists in State Departments of Education (NAECS/SDE) describe the risks and benefits of early learning standards.¹⁵ They caution that a major risk of any standards movement is that the responsibility for meeting the standards will be placed on children's shoulders rather than on the shoulders of those who should provide opportunities and supports for learning. They suggest that culturally and linguistically diverse children, as well as children with disabilities, may be at heightened risk. Nevertheless, they conclude that clear, research-based expectations for the content and desired results of early learning experiences can help focus curriculum and instruction and increase the likelihood of later positive outcomes.

Issue 2: The early literacy focus of effective curriculum

Although most educators and policy makers agree that a strong start in early literacy is critical, there is less agreement about how this is best accomplished. A major concern is ensuring that the curriculum addresses the overall learning and growth of the young child by continuing to stress the physical, social, emotional, and overall cognitive development of children and at the same time, strengthening the academic curriculum. Some express concern about what they perceive as an over-emphasis on early literacy and the creation of a curriculum imbalance. They caution against early literacy curricula that focus too narrowly on literacy skills and neglect consideration for all the domains of development that interact to promote children's personal and academic growth. Indeed, the physical, social, emotional, cognitive and language development of young children are actually major factors that influence early literacy development.¹⁶

Evidence-based practice and the early literacy curriculum

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In the area of literacy, both federal and state expectations have emphasized evidence-based practice to guide curriculum adoption and the evaluation of curriculum effectiveness. Evidence must be grounded in scientifically based research, a term used across a variety of fields that requires the application of systematic and objective procedures to obtain information to address important questions in a particular field. It is an attempt to ensure that those who use the research can have a high degree of confidence that it is valid and dependable. Whether a curriculum is homegrown or commercially prepared, those who develop and use it are expected to support their claims with a research base. Key components of an early literacy curriculum grounded in evidence-based early literacy research include: (1) oral language development, which includes vocabulary and listening; (2) an understanding of the alphabetic code, which includes phonological/phonemic awareness and knowledge of the alphabet; and (3) knowledge and understanding about print and its use.

Key components of the early literacy curriculum

Oral Language. Oral language develops concurrently with literacy development, and it includes listening comprehension, verbal expression, and vocabulary development. Oral language development is facilitated when children have many opportunities to use language in interactions with adults and each other and when they listen and respond to stories. Young children build vocabulary when they engage in activities that are cognitively and linguistically stimulating by encouraging them to describe events and build background knowledge.

Alphabetic Code. English is an alphabetic language, which means that the letters we use to write represent the sounds of the language that we speak. Knowledge of the alphabet letters and phonological awareness (the ability to distinguish the sounds within words) form the basis of early decoding and spelling ability, and both are correlated with later reading and spelling achievement. Young children can learn to name letters and to distinguish them from each other. They can also begin to develop an awareness of the constituent sounds within words, such as syllables, rhymes and phonemes.

Children should be immersed in language-rich environments in order to develop phonological awareness and similarly, it would be difficult to master the ABCs without lots of exposure to the alphabet (in books, on blocks, on refrigerator magnets, in cereal, in soup, in attempts to write, in having their messages written for them, etc.). Knowledge of the ABCs and phonological awareness do not usually just happen from exposure for most children, however. Parents, teachers, and older siblings often intentionally teach children the alphabet, and studies have shown that it is possible to teach phonological awareness to preschoolers and kindergarten children in ways that do not interfere with a comprehensive and rich curriculum focus but do improve later literacy.¹⁷

Print Knowledge and Use. Making sense of print involves an awareness and understanding of environmental print and an understanding of concepts of print, such as where to begin to read a book or a page and in what direction to read. Each of these is likely learned from interacting with others around print. An early literacy curriculum might include grocery store visits; being read to on a daily basis; having a writing center where

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children can experiment with written communication, and environmental print that is purposeful such as functional signs, labels and charts. In addition, effective early literacy teachers model the reading and writing processes during shared reading and writing. They explicitly comment aloud about what they are thinking as they read and write so as to make the process transparent to children.

The literacy curriculum as a program for prevention and intervention

Studies of the relationship between early literacy development and school achievement have had a profound impact on the early literacy curriculum as an intervention process for children considered to be at risk for failure. Risk factors include exhibiting a developmental disability (e.g. oral language impairment, mental retardation, hearing impairment), having a parent with a history of a reading disability, speaking a language or dialect that differs from the local academic curriculum, and/or living in a household in which experiences with oral and written language are infrequent.¹⁸ For children in such circumstances, a preventive intervention may be required to encourage timely attainment of the skills and abilities needed for later school readiness and achievement.

The key curriculum components are viewed as standard or essential elements of instruction for all children. Nevertheless, children vary in how well any "basic" curriculum will serve them. They differ in what they bring to the preschool setting and what they gain from it. Some children enter preschool having had the advantage of an abundance of experiences with books and other written materials, visiting interesting places, engaging in creative problem-solving and play, and participating in thought-provoking conversations and activities that serve to expand their general knowledge and intellectual development. For these children, both their linguistic and experiential backgrounds prepare them to benefit from a curriculum that reinforces and expands the rich reservoir of skills and knowledge these children possess. Other children need more, different, or specifically targeted learning opportunities in preschool. Skillful teachers, and the specialists who advise them, make adjustments within the framework of the curriculum to make instruction more responsive to student needs.

Issues related to a child's linguistic and cultural background represent a continuing and growing challenge for early literacy educators and curriculum developers. Latinos, for example, are now the largest minority group in the country—a group that is growing at a faster rate than the population as a whole.¹⁹ Even for many Englishspeaking children, the school language (or dialect) and culture may differ greatly from that of their homes. Teachers of young children need to keep in mind that a child's prekindergarten classroom may be the first setting of sustained contact with a new culture and will help set the stage for early success or failure with formal schooling.²⁰ Effective educators seek to learn as much as they can about the cultural and linguistic backgrounds of the children. Whenever practical, programs specifically focus on the development of both English and the child's home language. In general, the curriculum is implemented in ways that foster respect for what children bring to the learning situation and provide continuity between the child's experiences at home and those within the early childhood program.

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Class size and teacher-pupil ratio are related to how well teachers meet the demand for high quality. The strongest evidence that preschool programs can produce large educational benefits for economically disadvantaged children comes from studies in which programs had both highly capable teachers and relatively small groups of children.²¹

Issue 3: Accountability and assessment

Measuring children's early literacy development is an important part of a comprehensive early childhood program. Assessment is used to measure development and learning, to guide teacher and program planning and decision making, to identify children who might benefit from special services, and to report to and communicate with others.²² In addition to the ongoing, day-by-day systematic observations that link closely to the early childhood curriculum, there is a growing trend toward child assessment for program accountability. These assessments, in which early literacy is often a major component, reflect an increasingly high-stakes climate in which programs are required to demonstrate effectiveness in improving school readiness and creating positive child outcomes.