Pedagogical Aspects of Teaching, Learning, Assessing the Reading-Writing Elements for Primary School

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Abstract

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The acquirement and automaticity of reading and writing skills represent two main activities of the pupils in the early years of schooling, with a considerable implications on the child development and also on his school performances. These qualities are fundamental in the society we live and a normal development for a future adult. Difficulties that may occur in the attainment of these skills, and their persistence, draw teachers attention due to the pedagogical issues raised by these processes. The extension of reading and writing disorders can and will lead to negative effects on the development of pupil's personality. Alongside specialists in the education field, the teacher is the one and only, who can intervene through many appropriate teaching strategies and methods to overcome the encountered learning difficulties for every child. This paper presents a case study regarding these learning difficulties, control methods and ways of behavior accepted from the teacher's side.

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1. Introduction

The main feature of the educational process lies in its complexity, variability and diversity of its related set of correlations that exists between objective and subjective factors involved: the individual characteristics of learners, their intellectual level and their potential, personality and skills of teachers, teaching strategies they use, educational background etc. This creates particular situation,

uncontrollable circumstances that can exert influence in the activities of teaching-learning and assessment, influencing the training and education of the human being.

In particular situations when the student presents different difficulties, for example in terms of visual perception, auditory perception, oral language disorders, attention disorders, motor problems, etc., the risk of developing learning difficulties is high. However, adjustment of the learning and teaching strategies to student's potential and learning style, will allow students to increase learning efficiency. Also, the fact that teaching is regarded as a probabilistic instructions system, can be adjusted through a formative feedback.

2. Acquiring reading and writing

According to the curriculum for preparatory classes, grade I and grade II, one of the general competences refers to a variety of receiving text messages in known communication contexts. Thus, recognition and naming small and capital letters begins in the preparatory grade, as well as graphics and drawing the outlines of letters. Also, an important focus is on the prevention of the development of learning difficulties at reading and writing through development of speech and communication skills, development of vocabulary, and verbal memory and development of mnemonic skills for language elements. Training and development of organization of perceptual-motor behaviors and space structure is another important aspect that belongs to the pre reading and pre writing stage. Also the development of rhythmic sense is in fact a matter that focuses on the growth of phonological awareness and spelling tasks by segmenting the sounds. All these development areas that prepare the student to acquire reading and writing can be accessed through various educational games that depend on the creativity of the teacher.

Often the difficulties in acquiring reading and writing are put down to the absences of students, the precarious socio-cultural level of student's family, on affective disorders, the teachers lack of experience, etc., but, although these factors do not exist in all psychopedagogical situations, however there are children who have difficulties in reading and writing. This proves the presence of some possible deficiencies in the development of the areas described above and / or of working memory which can compromise the information association that needs to be used with those existing.

Working memory is information that can be stamped and stored for a short period of time and that can be used to solve a cognitive task. At a young student, working memory intervenes in reading new words. Although he knows all the letters that make up the word, he must rely on the working memory mechanisms in order to read. First he needs to keep in memory the correct order of letters, then to assign the correct sound to each letter (not to replace the deaf sounds to the sounds or vice versa, the sound to the deaf one), to separate the correct word into syllables, to retain the first syllable in order to identify the second syllable etc. He can easily identify the first two syllables and then stops at the next syllable, resume the first two that were identical, he stops again and only after the third try he manages to read the third syllable. This can be a tiring task and can lead to abandonment of the task, reducing the motivation to read and a decrease in learning performance.

Thus, even if the cognitive abilities would allow the student high performances, the lack of appropriate teaching strategies could bring difficulties in acquisition of reading and writing.

3. Teaching strategies in learning, reading and writing

Starting from the characteristics of participants in educational activities, particularities of their individual learning styles and going to the pedagogical requirements and the specific characteristics and methodical training situation, the teacher will develop it's teaching strategy. It will focus on two key dimensions, one that refers to ways of combining methods, procedures, means and forms of organizing the educational activities, and the other one, that refers to approach learning in order to assimilate reading and writing skills.

Teaching methodology aims at teaching methods and processes used in teaching, in the profound sense, a reflection over theory and practice of teaching methods and at procedures that are used. During the application of methods, procedures may vary without affecting ultimately the pursued aim, it can bring, at most, some nuances by updating, redistribution or suitability, emphasis or reinforcements in concrete tasks. The efficiency of a method depends on the appropriateness, quality and compliancing processes with the needs of students.

Curriculum allows for preparatory grade and insists on exercises based on games that aimed the coordination of movements, orientation development (knowledge of the body scheme, spatial orientation to orientation in space graphics, orientation in time) , the development of serialization and sense of rhythm, speech and vocabulary development, with the particularly important role in preparation for reading and writing acquisitions.

Developing strategies that improve the capacity of working memory will take into consideration creating stories using the given stimulus, " repetition exercises, visual imagery, items in to task " (St. Clair-Thompson et al., 2010, Visu-Petra & Cheie 2012, p.80), the repetition of pseudo - words (Maridaki-Kassotaki , 2002, Visu-Petra & Cheie , 2012 p.80).

In specific therapies for correcting dyslexia, held in the offices of the speech therapy Meixner method applies, or at least elements from this method for acquiring reading and writing. Meixner method is used in Hungary since 70-80 years , being used in first grades for reading and writing and preventing dyslexia. It is a phonetic - analytical and synthetic method that adapts to the pace and needs of the student.

Thereby, it can take into consideration a few important rules in acquiring reading and writing that can be applied successfully in the classroom by the teacher. For example, the acquisition of graphically similar letters (s - s, u n , etc.) or by way of joint (f , v, s - z etc.) will be taught longer intervals of time between them. In order to differentiate them it can be used with colors: a color for vowels and another color for consonants, deaf consonants another color and another color for the sound consonants. Also the teaching of the next letter will be performed only after the children will lean to read one of those letters that can create confusions.

Another important stage is the reading of syllables (phonetic-graphic analysis and synthesis). At this stage it is important that the student is taught how to read a syllable, namely will identify and

pronounce longer the first letter from the syllable in order to have sufficient time to identify and name the next letter. Automation in reading syllables will improve the reading.

Reading the words will start with bisyllabic words made up of two letters each syllable or one letter syllable and the other two sylables, it will continue with monosyllabic words, then bisyllabic and more complex, namely one syllable made of three letters and barely later it will reach polysyllabic words .

Reading stage will begin with the interrogative sentences in which students must answer, thus obliged to read them consciously. It will continue with reading short texts first, then they will become increasingly more complex.

Given the above facts and that the differentiated education prevails, adapting curriculum to student's particular needs is critical in the formation of their personality.

Teaching methodology, teaching methods regards several aspects, namely: mode of transmission, assimilation and deepening of knowledge, teaching methods and cognitive development, development of practical skills, control in acquiring knowledge, enhancement of intellectual skills and practical capacities, etc. , namely determining the performance level, harnessing opportunities for developing intellectual and moral qualities.

4. Functional and communicative model

Acquiring reading and writing is one of the conditions that contribute to the development of communication skills, by developing the capacity to perceive an oral and written expression. Also, it continues the further learning process of various written texts , developing from the earliest years of school a basic educational culture , creativity and efficient usage of their problem solving , understanding the beauty and the world in which we live.

Studying Communication in Romanian starting with the preparatory grade makes it possible to apply the principle of functional communicative even at this level, the curriculum allows the usage of the functional-communicative model through it's general competences and the specific one's and by the suggested learning activities.

Language becomes a tool in relationships with others, with a role in transmission of information and influencing the behavior and the manifestation of feelings and opinions. The diversity of communication field is big, enabling the description and narrative, entering the explanatory, argumentative, all depending on the teacher's creativity.

The implementation of this communicative-functional model since the beginning of school is challenging for teacher because he must achieve a confluence of scientific content with real life, thus preventing the complexity and difficulty of the real world. Using critical thinking and metacognitive strategies will make an efficient learning. Under the demands of the new communicative-functional model the student is taught to give new meaning of their own knowledge, make connections with previous information and recognize their applicability, underpinning the learning metacognition. It focuses on valuing emotional reaction on critical teaching, on reflection to a text heard or read. The

communication in Romanian language lesson will be outlined thus under the form of a dialogue both with the author and with himself, the language being fundamental in interpersonal communication.

5. Teacher's pedagogical approach of reading and writing difficulties in the classroom

The acquisition of reading and writing involves the need for adequate development of mental and perceptual motor processes of students, appropriate educational and emotional influences within the family and suitability of teaching strategies to their individual particularities.

Michael, aged seven and a half years, is a student in first grade at a public school. From the age of three, he was raised in a orphanage being abandoned by his biological parents. Here, he can benefit from specialized services, so he can grow and develop harmoniously, encouraging an adequate social integration.

Preparatory class begins with the adjustment of difficulties, behavior disorders, isolation, but thanks to the teacher he manages to integrate successfully in the class. While the teacher also identifies the difficulties that are faced by Michael and intervenes during the educational activities, constantly adapting content, methodology and assessment strategies, depending on the student's individual features.

According to the curriculum of first grade the process of reading and writing is learnt now. At Michael, we have noticed some difficulties in terms of reading words and texts: he read the words silently and then using his voice, perform inversions, omissions and even substituting letters or syllables, some words he read distorted, reading was quite slow. These issues were reflected in written omissions, inversions, substitutions letters / syllables uncertainty using new letters, messy writing with uneven letters and a slow pace in writing.

So the teacher was forced to turn to specialists inside the school (speech therapist, psychologist), but equally to adapt the curriculum to meet the needs of education and development of Michael, to be flexible, open and individualized. It was intended to have an organized framework, operational objectives were elaborate so that they can be reached by Michael, but without affecting the rest of the students, the learning experiences were designed differently, also active participation and involvement in various activities had a major importance.

The interactive methods, student's work in groups where each group had specific tasks, had a profound impact on Michael, meaning that he engaged in activities easily, he became communicative, he ad a better self-esteem and from the emotionally point he grew, also the social capabilities had been improved.

The teaching activity was done with all those involved in child education (classroom teacher, speech therapist, psychologist, teacher support, foster care) for an individualized education plan.

The individualized education plan made the intervention on reading and writing difficulties easier, ensuring overcoming them. With this it was organized and planned the action program for Michael's learning.

This individualized education plan took into account the organization of the priorities and the setting of the intervention steps. The principle of grading the information was followed, because Michael

needed gradual introduction of information, in small steps, in order that every deficient information transform into a clear one, so he could form a habit of correct reading and writing. Also the focus has been on permanent practicing these skills.

Communicating with Michael was stimulating, encouraging, prompting him and encouraging him to express desires, experiences, emotions, and preventing and avoiding rigidity in thinking. Communicatively functional principle had a special role in this case.

Working in this way, tracing at early stage the difficulties in the acquisition of reading and writing, adapting the tasks to the needs of Michael learning, therefore intervening early, it allowed him that at the end of first grade to acquire reading and writing.

Positive motivation in educational activities ensured the success, contributing to the harmonious formation and development of child's personality, defeating emotion and stress.

6. Conclusion

Effectively organized educational activities, choosing the proper teaching methods and forming favorable conditions for learners will influence their school performance. So, we can say that there is a methodical influence of the teacher on the learner, according as it develops, there is a substitution of the used methods into participative methods, active, practiced by the student himself. So these are methods of interior reflection, generating operational structure, without which there wouldn't be knowledge.

Adequate monitoring of certain student's reactions and of their evaluation, allows the establishing of a set of criteria that would be applied in the selection of teaching strategies according to the learner's needs and then actual achievement of sequences of training and education. Teacher's professionalism is seen in the ability of the teacher to master the widest possible range of effective methods, teaching creatively and effectively.

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