

Tikrit University
College of Education for Humanities
English Department



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Methodology

Whole Language

(Ch:7)

Prof. Dunia Tahir (PhD)

Whole Language

Introduction

Q1:If language isn't kept whole, isn't language anymore.

Explain.

Whole language was created in the 1980s by a group of US educators concerned with the teaching of what is referred to as language arts, that is, the teaching of reading and writing for first language learners.

Traditionally, the teaching of both reading and writing focused on a decoding approach to language. It means the focus on teaching the separate components of language such as grammar, vocabulary, and word recognition, and in particular the teaching of phonics. Phonics is based on the theory that reading involves identifying letters and turning them into sounds. Other reading theories approach reading through a focus on the individual skills or micro-skills that are believed to be involved in fluent reading.

The whole language movement was developed as a reaction to teaching methods such as these. It emerged when top-down reading theories were being promoted by influential reading specialists. The whole language movement was strongly opposed to approaches to teaching reading and writing that focused on isolated and discrete features of language and argued that language should be taught as a whole.

Whole language emphasized learning to read and write naturally with a focus on real communication and reading and writing for pleasure. In the 1990s this approach became popular in the United State as a motivating and innovative way of teaching language arts skills to primary school children. It soon attracted the interest of specialists in second language teaching since it appeared compatible with the principle of both CLT and the Natural Approach . It shares a philosophical and

instructional perspective with CLT , since it emphasizes the importance of meaning and meaning making in teaching and learning as well as the emphasis on experiential learning, the integration of skills, and the role of authentic language. It also relates to natural approaches to language learning since it is designed to help children and adults learn a second language in the same way that children are believed to learn their first language. A whole language approach was widely used in first language reading programs from the 1990s.

Q2:Is whole language approach, method, philosophy or belief ?

In the 1990s considerable discussion was devoted to whether whole language is an approach, a method , a philosophy or a belief. In a survey of 64articles treated whole language as an approach 34.4%) (as a philosophy, 23.4%) (as a belief and 14.1%) (as a method 6.3%). Whole language is not a program, set of materials , method, practice, or technique; rather it is a perspective on language and learning that leads to the acceptance of certain strategies , methods, materials and techniques. We see it as an approach based on key principles about language (language as a whole) and learning (writing, reading, listening and speaking should be integrated in learning) . Each whole language teacher was encouraged to implement the theories of whole language as he or she interprets them and according to the kinds of classes and learns he or she is teaching.

Approach

Theory of Language

Q3:Explain whole language views.

1-Whole language views language as a social one that views language as a vehicle for human communication and in which there is an interactional relationship between readers and writers. Language use is always in a social context, and this applies to both oral and written language , to both

first and second language use. Heavy emphasis in whole language is placed on authenticity on engagement with the authors of written texts, and also on conversation.

2-Whole language also views language cognitively as a vehicle for internal interaction for egocentric speech, for thinking. We use language to think : in order to discover what we know, we sometimes write, perhaps talk to a friend, or mutter to ourselves silently. A functional model of language is also referred to in many articles on whole language. Language is always seen as something that is used for meaningful purposes and to carry out authentic functions.

3-Whole language also rejects the view that language can be broken down into separate skills. Language is always linked to authentic contexts for its use, which typically involve an integration of skills. Grammar is not taught in isolation but is linked to situations where learners need to use it, such as in editing a piece of written text.

Theory of Learning

The learning theory underlying Whole Language is in the humanistic and constructivist schools. The description of Whole Language classrooms recall terms familiar to humanistic approaches to education and to language learning: Whole Language is said to be authentic, personalized, self-directed, collaborative, pluralistic. Such characteristics are believed to focus learner attention and to motivate mastery. Constructivist learning theory holds that knowledge is socially constructed , rather than received or discovered. Thus , constructivist learners create meaning, learn by doing, and work collaboratively in mixed groups on common projects. Rather than transmitting knowledge to students, teachers collaborate with them to create knowledge and understanding in their mutual social context.

Whole language is a constructivist approach to education; constructivist teachers emphasize that students create their own knowledge from what they encounter. Using a holistic approach to teaching, constructivist teachers do not believe that students learn effectively by analyzing small chunks of a system, such as learning the letters of the alphabet in order to learn language. Constructivist instructors see learning as a cognitive experience unique to each learner's own experience and prior knowledge, which forms the framework for new knowledge.

Rather than seeking to cover the curriculum, learning focuses on the learners' experience, needs, interests, and aspirations.

Design

Objectives

The major principles and goals underlying the design of whole Language instruction are as follows:

- 1-The reading of real texts of high interest, particularly literature.
- 2-Reading for the sake of comprehension and for a real purposes.
- 3-Writing for a real audience and not simply to practice writing skills.
- 4-Integration of reading, writing, and other skills.
- 5-Reading and writing in partnership with other learners

Q4:What are the activities that are often used in whole language instruction?

- 1-individual and small-group reading and writing
- 2-ungraded dialogue journals
- 3-writing portfolios
- 4-writing conferences
- 5-student-made books
- 6-story writing