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***"New Dimensions Toward Education, Advocacy and Collaboration
for Individuals with Special Needs"***

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- To encourage international cooperation and collaborative international research.
- To promote continuing education of its members by organizing conferences in different countries around the world.
- To foster international communication in special education through *The Journal of The International Association of Special Education*.

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Table of Contents

Preface/ vii

Designing Effective School-Based Interventions for Children with Autism in Underserved Regions - John J. Wheeler & Stacy L. Carter/ 1

Hearing Maps: Children With Glue Ear Communicate Their Needs - Carmel Capewell & Sue Ralph/ 2

The Journey Toward Visibility: A Case Study of The Perceptions of Children With Disabilities In Honduras - Christine M. Croyle/ 3

Am I Losing My Mind? Teachers Response to Mindfulness Practice - Brad Walkenhorst, Amrita Chaturvedi, Nikki L. Murdick, & Barbara C. Gartin/ 5

Early Intervention For Children With Intellectual Disabilities: Nigeria Perspective - Eni-Olorunda J. Tolulope/ 7

Supporting Teachers of Students With Autism Spectrum Disorders in China - Huiping (Hope) Tian & Kathleen Puckett/ 8

Methods of Data Analysis For Small Samples: Nonparametric Tests - George Chitiyo & Morgan Chitiyo/ 10

Special Education at Internatonal Schools: Current Services and Future Needs - Donna Marie Campbell/ 11

Educational Accommodations According to Intellectual Abilities: A Case Study - Mohamad Madhi, Amir Ghamarani & Ahmad Sharifi/ 12

Perceived Social Support By Youngsters With Dyslexia And Motor Disability - Urszula Gosk & Monika Dominiak-Kochanek/ 14

Adult Siblings in The Face of Their Brother's or Sister's Disability: Case Study - Małgorzata Sekulowicz & Marcel Witkowski/ 16

The Impact of Therapeutic Intervention - Ange Anderson/ 18

Effectiveness of Act on Anxiety and Depression in Students with Social Anxiety - Soheila Safary & Foroozan Irandoost/ 19

Authentic Assessment in Action: A Programmatic Approach to Multiple Means of Data Based Curriculum Development - Lora Lee Smith Canter, Kathi Wilhite, Laura King, Jennifer Williams, & Debbie Metcalf/ 21

Family Involvement in Educating Children with Congenital and Profound Hearing Impairment - Gladys B. Babudoh/ 23

Oppositional Defiant Disorder and the Current Situation of Children with This Disorder in Ho Chi Minh City - Le Thi Minh Ha & Le Nguyet Trinh/ 24

Perception of Hearing Impaired Students Towards Inclusive Education in Oyo State - Emmanuel Olufemi Adeniyi/ 26

Postsecondary Students with Disabilities: The Need for Advocacy and Transition Education - Heather Taylor Wizikowski/ 28

Educational Attitudes to Children with Attention and Activity Disorders ADHD, ADD and Learning Disabilities - Hucik Jan & Hucikova Alena/ 29

Advocating for Policy Change - Laura W. Alexander/ 31

Teacher and Faculty Collaboration to Improve Academic Performance of Students with Disabilities: A Case Study - Shelly Meyers/ 33

Assessment Implications for Qualitative Education for Children with Intellectual Disability in Ibadan, Nigeria - John Oyundoyin/ 35

Teachers' Views on Inclusion in Regular Schools in Ilorin West, Kwara, Nigeria - Jonathan Omoniyi Olukotun/ 36

The Solution Focused Approach as the Way of Development of Communication and Social Skills of Pupils (Not Only) in Terms of School Inclusion - Anna Semanova & Ladislav Hornak/ 38

A Comparative Study of Self-Concept of Male and Female Students with Hearing Impairment - Shahida Sajjad/ 39

Educational Support Provided for Students with Special Educational Needs in EU Inclusive Schools - Anna Zamkowska/ 41

A Survey of Deaf Culture Awareness in China - Lijiao Huang/ 43

Possibilities to Support the Professional Activity of with Disabilities - Bernadeta Szczupal/ 44

Attitude of Students with Hearing Impairment Towards Computer and Internet use in Ibadan, Oyo State, Nigeria - Adebomi M. Oyewumi/ 46

Prevalence of Attention Deficit Hyperactive Disorder Among Primary School Pupils in Moro Local Government Area, Kwara State - Olubukola Christianah Dada/ 47

Partial Cognitive Functions Affecting Reading Techniques of Pupils with Mild Intellectual Disabilities - Jana Dordovicova (Sopkova), Bibiana Hlebova & Veronika Palkova/ 49

Proceedings of the 14th Biennial Conference of the International Association of Special Education

- Investigation of Epidemic Proportions of Underachievement Syndrome Among Gifted Learners in Nigeria - Fakolade Olufemi Aremu/ 51
- Scaffolding Literacy Instruction for Pupils with Reading Disabilities in Oyo State, Nigeria - Kelechi Uchemadu Lazarus/ 52
- Inclusion/Collaboration With Practical Activities For Students With Special Needs (Practices And Trends) - Madalen Sugrue/ 54
- A Collaborative Effort to Improve Autism Spectrum Disorder Training for Educators in Tanzania - Amanda A. Martinage/ 56
- Teachers' Awareness of the use of Concrete Representational Abstract in Teaching Mathematics to Students with Learning Disabilities in Ilorin Metropolis, Nigeria - Adesokan Adedayo/ 57
- Improving the Mooc: Developing The Short (and Supportive) Open Online Course Model - Elizabeth M. Dalton, Kendra Grant & Luis Perez/ 58
- The Quality of Life of Fathers of Children with Intellectual Disabilities - Dorota Tomczyszyn/ 60
- Early intervention for children with autism spectrum disorders in Nigeria: Parent and family perspectives - Temitope A. Ayorinde & Tolulope Eni-Olorunda/ 62
- Emotional Support as A Factor Strengthening the Speech Therapy Effects in Children - Dorota Beltkiewicz/ 63
- Universal Design for Learning: Integration Models in Preservice and Inservice Instructor Training - Elizabeth M. Dalton, Britt Tatman Ferguson, Kendra Grant & Luis Perez/ 65
- School Success Scale: Its Development and use in Educational Practice - Tatiana Dubayova, Tatiana Cekanova & Veronika Palkova/ 67
- Parental Feeding Practices in Turkish Children with Autism Spectrum Disorder: Factorial Validation of the Feeding Strategies Questionnaire - Bekir Fatih Meral/ 69
- Overcoming Barriers to Inclusive Education in a Developing Society: Forging New Avenues - Sudipta Ghose/ 71
- Predictors of School Success in Pre-School Children with Problem Behaviors - Jana Kozarova, Maria Podhajecka & Jarmila Zolnova/ 72
- Enhancing Adolescents' Acquisition Of Content Using Collaborative Structures In Inclusive Settings - Barbara Mallette/ 74
- Early Identification of Hearing and Visual Impairment at Kokilaben Dhirubhai Ambani Hospital and Medical Research Center, Mumbai: A Working Model - Anirban Dasgupta, Zenia Irani, Sanjiv Badhwar, Savio Pereira & Niren Dongre/ 76
- Making Educational Assessment Inclusive for Learners with Learning Disabilities in Zambia - Kenneth Kapalu Muzata/ 78
- Eco-Behavioral Analysis of A Basic School That Included Pupils with Disabilities - Seth Amponsah Kwarteng/ 79
- Effectiveness of Metacognition Strategies Training on Reading in First and Foreign Languages - Soheila Safary Salar Faramarzi/ 81
- Importance of Formative Assessment on Academic Performance of Learners with Intellectual Disabilities in Kwara State, Nigeria - Rasheed A. A. Hamzat/ 83
- Women with Disabilities in the State of Qatar - Asma Al Attiyah/ 85
- Augmentative and Alternative Communication in A Regular Classroom Routine: Case Study - Débora Deliberato & Leila Regina D'Oliveira Paula Nunes/ 86
- Managing Behavioral Disorders Among Gifted Students Through Bibliotherapeutic Interventions - Gboyega Adelowo Adelodun/ 88
- Strategies for Maximum Learning with Minimum Stress - Kay D. Thomson/ 90
- Helping Students with Learning Disabilities to Think Mathematically - Jeremy M. Lynch, Adelaide Aukamp, Danielle Dulick & Sararose D. Lynch/ 91
- Special Education Teacher-Training Programs: Do Licensure Scores/GPA Predict Teacher Effectiveness? - Holly Pae & Richard Combes/ 93
- Enhancing Verbal Communication Skills in Children with Autism through Hippotherapy - Abiodun Adewunmi & Olaniyi Lawal/ 95
- Understanding and Advocating for IEP Accommodations - Diane D. Painter & Katherine L. Valladares/ 97
- Enhancing Digital Literacy of Learners with Special Needs - Kelly Ling Li Peng & Zuraidah Noordin/ 98
- Parents of Deaf and Hard of Hearing Children's Expectations Towards the Education System - Iwona Jagoszewska/ 100
- Individuals' Learning Potential of Polish And Taiwanese Preschoolers in Dynamic Assessment: Comparative Study - Ewa Maria Kulesza & Chiu-Hsia Huang/ 102
- Assessing Learning Outcomes of Students with Diverse Needs in Inclusive Settings - Ahon Adaka T. & Ugo, A. Elizabeth/ 103

Conclusion

The 'underachieving' label for the gifted students is quite unfortunate because it focuses the blame on 'troublesome' gifted children and burdens them with the 'troublesome' gifted children and burdens them with the sole responsibility of reversing their 'academic neglect'. It is therefore difficult to raise and teach gifted underachievers, but within these students is the potential and usually the wish to achieve importance. When the defense mechanisms of underachievement are cut away, underachievers can become superachievers. Thus, educators, parents, and mentors are significant in these frustrating underachieving patterns.

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SCAFFOLDING LITERACY INSTRUCTION FOR PUPILS WITH READING DISABILITIES IN OYO STATE, NIGERIA

Kelechi Uchemadu Lazarus, Ph.D.

Introduction

Literacy is the ability to use language and images in rich and varied forms to read, write, listen, speak, view, represent, and think critically about ideas (The Ministry of Education of Ontario, 2006). However, many pupils in regular education classrooms in Nigeria experience substantial underachievement in learning particularly in reading despite possessing normal intelligence. Their reading difficulties place them at a disadvantageous position and affect their optimal performance within and outside the school setting (Lazarus, 2009). Hopefully, effective literacy instruction (specifically, in the reading element of literacy) through teacher scaffolds would ameliorate the reading problems encountered by pupils with reading disabilities in regular education classrooms instruction.

Theoretical Framework that Underpin this Study

Teachers' use of scaffolding instruction refers to process of temporarily providing support to a learner and then gradually

[Back to Table of Contents](#)

withdrawing this support as the learner becomes capable of independence in performing tasks (Wood, Bruner, & Ross as cited in Pentimonti & Justice, 2009). From a Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD) theoretical perspective (Vygotsky, 1987), what children can do with the assistance of others is more indicative of their mental development than what they can do alone. This study focused on four ways to scaffold reading instruction namely, read-aloud, shared reading, guided reading and independent reading.

Read-Aloud

Read aloud represents the greatest amount of support offered to pupils with reading disabilities as they read and write. According to the National Association for the Education of Young Children (2003), the read aloud strategy, requires teachers to use three types of scaffolding or support: (a) before-reading activities that arouse children's interest and curiosity in the book about to be read; and (b) during-reading prompts and questions that keep children actively engaged with the text being read; and (c) after-reading questions and activities that give children an opportunity to discuss and respond to the books that have been read. Based on children's literacy learning needs such as development of new vocabulary and concepts, promotion of phonological awareness, instruction can be easily integrated into any of these three phases of story reading.

Shared Reading

With this strategy, teachers support pupils' reading by decoding the words for them while they look at the print and read along. Whilst pupils participate in reading (e.g. read a new and familiar story), learn critical concepts of how print works, get the feel of learning and begin to perceive themselves as readers, teachers intentionally encourage and support pupils' engagement and participation in reading activities. Moreover, Burkins and Croft (2010) stated that shared reading is usually instructionally dense because it is the step in the usually instructional continuum just before guided reading.

Guided Reading

This is a strategy of teaching reading to small groups of children who read texts at pupils' instructional level. The teacher demonstrates reading strategies and thereby helps pupils learn how to use them. With this strategy, pupils' problem-solving, comprehension, and decoding skills are reinforced and they get to learn effective strategies they need to become independent. The goal of guided reading is to help pupils build their reading power—to build a network of strategic actions for processing texts (Fountas & Pinnell, 2012).

Independent Reading

Independent reading represents the highest level of teacher scaffold in reading. It entails that pupils interact with the text in the gradual release of responsibility. It allows pupils with reading disabilities to practice the strategies and skills they learned during the other instructional contexts (that is, read aloud, shared reading and guided reading lessons (Burkins & Croft, 2010). The goal is to help pupils improve their reading and learning and develop a greater level of independence. It helps to build pupils' confidence and strengthens the use of reading strategies pupils will need for new and more complex texts.

Research

Two hundred and eight (281) primary school teachers from 21 schools in Ibadan region (with eleven local government areas), Oyo State were purposively selected. Sixty four (64) of them were males while one hundred and forty-four (144) were females. They all participated voluntarily. The Scaffolding Reading Instruction Questionnaire developed by the researcher was used to test teachers' perspectives of their use of scaffolding strategies in their reading classrooms for pupils with reading disabilities.

Results

The responses on the four point Likert scale were graded and the criterion mean weight was set at 2.00, therefore, any responses below 2.00 was regarded as not significant while those above 2.00 were significant. Descriptive statistics of frequency counts, percentages, means and standard deviations were used to analyze the data. Generally, respondents' perspectives were favorable in regards to their use of the four strategies (read aloud, shared reading, guided reading and independent reading) to scaffold reading instruction for pupils with reading disabilities in the regular classroom. This means that all the respondents agreed that they apply scaffolds or supports when teaching pupils with reading disabilities. The results agree with the research literature, and also imply that all teachers should apply instructional scaffolds when teaching pupils with reading disabilities for improved performance.

Recommendations

Workshops, seminars and in-service training becomes imperative in the enterprise of updating the teaching skills of regular classroom teachers as far as scaffolding strategies are concerned. With collaboration and support from all stake holders in education in this direction, pupils with reading disabilities in the regular classrooms will overcome their challenges so as to learn since learning is life.

Suggestions for Future Research

There is the need to investigate the perception of teachers in other classroom settings such as inclusive classrooms, towards their exposure with regards to the use of scaffolding instructional strategies.

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INCLUSION/COLLABORATION WITH PRACTICAL ACTIVITIES FOR STUDENTS WITH SPECIAL NEEDS (PRACTICES AND TRENDS)

Madalen Sugrue, Ed.D.

Greater integration of students who have special needs into schools and classrooms nation-wide is obvious. The Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) places the students who have a disability to have access to the general education curriculum. All students need a warm and welcoming atmosphere and successful inclusion can only occur when the general and special education teacher share possession of the skills necessary to meet the needs of students with special needs (disabilities) in the general education classrooms (Klinger & Vaughn, 2002).

Focus on individual planning, curriculum alignment and cooperative learning must be part of the initial preparation. Access to the general education curriculum is the educational motto of the INCLUSIVE MOVEMENT. Adaptations, accommodations and modifications are part of the program.

Teachers must also develop strategies to, facilitate the successful inclusion of students of special needs in general education classrooms. School personnel must work on effective, cooperative methods to provide appropriate programs to all students. Part of the special education mandate asks teachers to understand what normal child development looks like so they can accurately recognize developmental delays. For ease of presentation, material has evolved in a PEPSI model. These areas of development provide a frame of reference for looking at an individual and a sense of continuity about normal and predictable changes in children over time (McCoy 2009). The letters of PEPSI stand for:

1. Physical
2. Emotional
3. Philosophical or moral
4. Social
5. Intellectual or cognitive. (McCoy 2009)

Modifying lessons, involving teachers and creating a school environment that fosters self-esteem and readiness for the outside

[Back to Table of Contents](#)