

Myroslava Chernii,

bachelor student

(Pavlo Tychyna Uman State Pedagogical University),

Alona Solodchuk,

Candidate of Pedagogical Sciences,

Associate Professor at the Foreign Languages Department

(Pavlo Tychyna Uman State Pedagogical University)

ENHANCING PHONEMIC AWARENESS AND VOCABULARY SKILLS WHILE TEACHING READING

In today's educational landscape, it is widely recognized that developing strong phonemic awareness and vocabulary skills is crucial for students' reading success. Phonemic awareness refers to the ability to hear, identify and manipulate individual sounds or phonemes in spoken language. This skill is essential for decoding words and understanding the relationship between sounds and letters. An awareness of phonemes is necessary to grasp the alphabetic principle that underlies our system of written language. Specifically, developing readers must be sensitive to the internal structure of words in order to benefit from formal reading instruction. If children understand that words can be divided into individual phonemes and that phonemes can be blended into words, they are able to use letter-sound knowledge to read and build words. As a consequence of this relationship, phonological awareness in kindergarten is a strong predictor of later reading success. Researchers have shown that this strong relationship between phonological awareness and reading success persists throughout school [1].

Vocabulary skills, on the other hand, are crucial for comprehension and fluency in reading. A strong vocabulary allows students to understand the meaning of words and make connections between words, ideas and concepts. Therefore, teachers must find ways to enhance both phonemic awareness and vocabulary skills while teaching reading.

One effective strategy for enhancing phonemic awareness is through phonics instruction. Phonics instruction involves teaching students the relationships between sounds and letters, helping them decode words more easily. By incorporating phonics into reading instruction, teachers can help students develop a strong foundation in phonemic awareness. It refers to the ability to recognize, manipulate and segment individual sounds in words. When students have a strong sense of phonemic awareness, they are better able to develop fluency in reading. One way to enhance phonemic awareness is through activity such as blending exercises. By engaging students in these activities, we can help them become more proficient at recognizing and manipulating individual sounds in words. To understand what they read, students need to be accurate, fluent readers; teaching students phonemic awareness is one way to build strong word reading skills that allow students to focus their attention on the meaning of texts they read. Teaching phonemic awareness also helps students learn to spell; when students spell words, they use phonemic awareness skills to segment words into sounds before representing each phoneme with a grapheme [2].

In addition to phonics instruction, teachers can also use activities and games to reinforce phonemic awareness skills. For example, students can play games that involve segmenting and blending sounds such as «I Spy» or «Sound Bingo.» These activities make learning phonemic awareness fun and engaging for students, ultimately leading to better reading outcomes.

When it comes to vocabulary skills, teachers can introduce new words through read-alouds, discussions and word study activities. By exposing students to a wide range of vocabulary words and encouraging them to use context clues to determine word meanings, teachers can help students expand their vocabulary and improve their reading comprehension. Vocabulary skills are also critical in the development of reading ability. A strong vocabulary allows students to comprehend text more easily and make connections between words and their meanings. To enhance vocabulary skills while teaching reading, educators can incorporate explicit vocabulary instruction into their lessons. This could include teaching students the meanings of new words, encouraging them to use context clues to determine the meanings of unfamiliar words, and providing opportunities for students to practice using new vocabulary in context.

For example, teachers can create word walls or interactive word banks where students can access and review new vocabulary words. Additionally, teachers can model the use of new vocabulary words in sentences and encourage students to do the same in their own writing.

Incorporating both phonemic awareness and vocabulary instruction into reading lessons can significantly enhance students' literacy development. By focusing on these key components, educators can help students become more proficient readers and ultimately improve their academic success. As educators, it is important to prioritize the enhancement of phonemic awareness and vocabulary skills while teaching reading to set students up for success both in the classroom and beyond.

REFERENCES

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