

A CRITICAL REVIEW OF CASE STUDIES AND INNOVATIVE STRATEGIES FOR ENHANCING LITERACY EDUCATION

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ABSTRACT

This study undertakes a critical review analysis of case studies on teaching reading and emerging literacies, with a focus on the book "Literacy and Libraries: Learning from Case Studies" by DeCandido and Office (2001). The study examines theories, instructional approaches, challenges, and strategies associated with teaching reading and new literacies. It addresses the ongoing debate between phonics-based instruction and whole language approaches, explores the integration of digital and multimodal literacies, and considers the needs of diverse learners, including those with learning disabilities and English language learners. The study also recognizes the role of libraries and librarians in promoting literacy and provides recommendations for a balanced literacy approach that incorporates phonics, whole language strategies, and digital literacies. The findings contribute to the existing body of knowledge on effective teaching approaches and challenges in literacy education, supporting educators, researchers, and policymakers in enhancing reading instruction.

Keywords: Teaching reading; emerging literacies; advanced teaching; balanced literacy approach; digital multimodal literacies

1. INTRODUCTION

The purpose of the present study is to undertake a critical review analysis of case studies on teaching reading and emerging literacies, with a particular focus on the book "Literacy and Libraries: Learning from Case Studies" by DeCandido and Office (DeCandido, 2001). The analysis will adhere to the principles of a case study analysis, which include identifying important difficulties, researching various courses of action, evaluating them in the context of evolving literacies, and recommending the most appropriate and sustainable method.

"Literacy and Libraries: Learning from Case Studies" by DeCandido and Office (2001) is a significant work in the fields of literacy studies and library sciences, providing fundamental insights into the symbiotic relationship between literacy development and library involvement. The authors demonstrate the critical role libraries play in improving literacy skills and promoting lifelong learning journeys through a comprehensive examination of several case studies. Drawing on theoretical frameworks such as the "Simple View of Reading" and the "Interactive Compensatory Model," this work offers a thorough examination of how libraries act as catalysts for literacy development and community empowerment.

The "Simple View of Reading," which holds that reading comprehension is the result of two critical components: decoding and language comprehension (Gough & Tunmer, 1986; Hoover & Gough, 1990), is central to the discussion. DeCandido and Office explain how libraries help to the development of both decoding abilities through access to different reading materials and language comprehension through interactive storytelling sessions and literacy

initiatives. Furthermore, the "Interactive Compensatory Model," developed by Stanovich (1980) and Perfetti (1985), emphasizes the dynamic interaction of many cognitive and contextual elements in determining reading comprehension. DeCandido and Office's case studies demonstrate how libraries can function as adaptable learning settings, offering targeted interventions and resources to persons with a variety of literacy requirements.

Furthermore, the book provides concrete recommendations for librarians, educators, and officials working to improve reading results in their communities. Libraries can effectively address their clients' varied literacy difficulties by using technology, developing connections with local schools, and adopting innovative programs. DeCandido and Office's work highlights not only libraries' transformative power, but also the significance of continued collaboration and research to improve literacy interventions and ensure equal access to knowledge.

In an era of rapid technological breakthroughs and shifting literacy landscapes, "Literacy and Libraries" shines as a beacon of hope, advocating for libraries' critical role in fostering a more literate, informed, and empowered society. This work goes beyond mere observation by incorporating theoretical insights from seminal papers such as those by Gough and Tunmer (1986), Hoover and Gough (1990), Stanovich (1980), and Perfetti (1985), to provide a scholarly exploration of the underlying mechanisms driving literacy development within library contexts. As we aim for a future in which literacy is a fundamental human right, "Literacy and Libraries" demonstrates libraries' long-term significance as agents of social transformation and enlightenment.

Meanwhile, there are various strong reasons why this investigation is required. To begin, a greater understanding of the core theories and practices involved with teaching reading and emerging literacies is required. Educators can get a complete understanding of the concepts and theories that underpin good reading instruction by researching the available literature. The Simple View of Reading and the Interactive Compensatory Model, for example, provide useful insights into the aspects that contribute to reading comprehension and the interaction of different reading abilities (Benson-Goldberg & Erickson, 2024; Green & McLachlan, 2024).

Second, investigating case studies allows us to investigate various approaches to teaching reading, such as phonics-based education, whole-language approaches, and the integration of digital and multimodal literacies. Each strategy has its own set of advantages and disadvantages, and a detailed examination of case studies can shed light on their efficacy in developing reading skills and promoting comprehension. This understanding is critical for educators and policymakers looking for evidence-based methods to improve literacy instruction (Cordova Jr et al., 2024; Ramos, 2024).

Furthermore, our study intends to address critical difficulties in the teaching of reading and emerging literacies. We can contribute to the continuing discussion over educational methods by comparing the effectiveness of traditional phonics-based instruction with whole language alternatives. Furthermore, investigating the integration of digital and multimodal literacies in reading teaching allows us to better understand their impact on student engagement and comprehension in the digital age. In addition, the study intends to address the needs of a varied range of learners, such as those with learning disabilities or English language learners (ELLs). We can encourage inclusive reading instruction and support the academic success of all kids by studying tactics that cater to the particular needs of these learners, such as differentiated instruction and language development (Scholes, 2024; Wei, 2024).

Finally, the study acknowledges the critical role of libraries and librarians in promoting literacy and offering reading teaching tools. Examining libraries' contributions and librarians' experience can help educators understand how they might improve reading instruction, assist in resource selection, and encourage information literacy abilities in students. This study intends to contribute to the existing body of expertise on teaching reading and new literacies by addressing these five important factors. The findings can help educators, researchers, and policymakers design successful teaching approaches and address literacy education obstacles.

2. METHOD

This study used a qualitative research approach, including a literature review and case study analysis. To create a theoretical framework, the literature review included a careful examination of important scholarly works and reliable sources. The case study analysis focused on case studies from the book "Literacy and Libraries: Learning from Case Studies" by DeCandido and Office (2001), which provided real-world insights into teaching reading and new literacies. Discussion among educators also contributed to the study's enrichment. This analytical approach allowed for a thorough examination of the subject matter, adding to current knowledge and understanding of effective teaching approaches and obstacles in literacy education.

3. RESULT AND DISSCUSSION

This critical review analysis intends to investigate case studies on teaching reading and new literacies, with a specific focus on Case studies from the book "Literacy and Libraries: Learning from Case Studies" by DeCandido and Office (DeCandido, 2001). The analysis will follow the principles for a case study analysis, which include identifying major challenges, investigating various courses of action, evaluating them in the context of emerging literacies, and suggesting the most appropriate and sustainable path of action.

Exploring Theories and Approaches in Teaching Reading and New Literacies: A Foundation for Case Study Analysis

It is necessary to go deeper into the important facts and theories linked with teaching reading and emerging literacies in order to perform a full examination of these topics. Reading theories are important in developing instructional approaches and comprehending the reading process. The Simple View of Reading and the Interactive Compensatory Model are two significant reading theories. According to Gough and Tunmer (1986), the Simple View of Reading, reading comprehension is the result of two important components: decoding abilities and language understanding. According to this view, decoding abilities comprise the ability to detect and pronounce words precisely and fluently, whereas language comprehension relates to understanding the meaning and context of the written text. The combination of these two components impacts the overall reading skills and comprehension of a reader (Kim & Zagata, 2024).

Stanovich's (2009) Interactive Compensatory Model extends on the Simple View of Reading by stressing the compensatory aspect of reading skills. This approach proposes that inadequacies in one aspect of reading, such as decoding, can be compensated for by superior skills in another, such as vocabulary knowledge or background information. Various reading talents interact and assist one other in this approach to aid comprehension. Based on the case studies, it is likely that diverse approaches to teaching reading, such as phonics-based instruction, whole language approaches, and the integration of digital and multimodal literacies, are being investigated. Phonics-based instruction focuses on teaching children the relationship between letters and sounds so that they may correctly decode words (Almansoori et al., 2024; Shenoy et al., 2024). The emphasis in this technique is on systematic and explicit training in phonemic awareness, phonics, and word recognition strategies. It is consistent with the necessity of decoding skills as emphasized in the Simple View of Reading.

Whole language approaches, on the other hand, stress meaning-making and comprehension by immersing learners in rich and realistic reading experiences. This approach recognizes the importance of language comprehension, as underlined in the Simple View of Reading. Whole language approaches frequently integrate strategies such as collaborative reading, guided reading, and individual reading to nurture a love of reading and build students' reading comprehension skills (Ghafar, 2024; Maspu, 2024). Integration of digital and multimodal literacies has gained popularity in reading education in recent years. This method recognizes the changing nature of literacy in the digital age, in which students encounter a wide

range of texts that integrate written, visual, and interactive features. Digital and multimodal literacies include abilities such as navigating online texts, critically analyzing digital information, and effectively creating and communicating meaning using multimedia tools. Integrating multiple literacies into reading education is consistent with the changing environment of reading and the Interactive Compensatory Model, which highlights the interaction of many reading abilities (Fedorenko, 2019; Stanovich, 1980). In the absence of specific case study information, these theories and methodologies serve as a framework for understanding the potential subjects and challenges that may be addressed in case studies on teaching reading and emerging literacies.

Exploring Key Issues in Teaching Reading and New Literacies

Based on the case studies chosen, we may look deeper into the four fundamental difficulties associated with teaching reading and new literacies. Each topic is backed by relevant ideas and research findings.

1. The effectiveness of traditional phonics-based instruction versus whole language approaches in developing reading skills

The argument between phonics-based education versus whole-language approaches in reading instruction has raged for a long time. Phonics-based training stresses decoding abilities while emphasizing the link between letters and sounds. It is supported by the Phonics First Theory (Adams, 1994), which claims that explicit phonics education improves reading accuracy and fluency. Whole language approaches, on the other hand, emphasize meaning-making and understanding while encouraging the integration of reading, writing, listening, and speaking. According to research, such as the National Reading Panel Report (2000), a balanced strategy that integrates both phonics-based instruction and whole language tactics results in the best reading achievement and comprehension outcomes.

2. The integration of digital and multimodal literacies in reading instruction and its impact on student engagement and comprehension

Integrating digital and multimodal literacies into reading instruction has become increasingly vital as digital technology and multimedia resources have proliferated. According to the New London Group's idea of "multiliteracies" (Cope & Kalantzis, 2000), literacy today encompasses the ability to navigate, analyze, and create meaning from multiple kinds of communication. Through interactive and visually engaging resources, the incorporation of digital and multimodal literacies in reading instruction increases student engagement. It also fosters critical thinking by teaching learners how to analyze and understand information from multiple sources. According to Brooks & Normore (2010), digital and multimodal literacies have a favorable impact on reading comprehension and motivation.

3. Addressing the needs of diverse learners, including those with learning disabilities or English language learners, in the context of reading instruction

Addressing the needs of various learners, including those with learning disabilities or English language learners (ELLs), is part of inclusive reading instruction. The Response to Intervention (RTI) framework (Fuchs & Fuchs, 2006) provides a systematic way to identifying and aiding children who are struggling with learning. To suit the individual requirements of various learners, differentiated instruction tactics such as additional support, scaffolding, or adapted materials can be utilized. The necessity of specifically teaching vocabulary, comprehension methods, and language development in reading education for ELLs has been highlighted by studies (August & Shanahan, 2017). Culturally responsive pedagogy is also necessary for building an inclusive learning environment in which students' cultural origins and experiences are acknowledged and respected (Gay, 2018).

4. The role of libraries and librarians in promoting literacy and providing resources for reading instruction

Libraries and librarians play an important role in literacy promotion and reading instruction. They give you access to a wide variety of reading materials, such as print books, e-books, audiobooks, and digital tools. Lance and Hofschire's (2012) Library Impact Studies show a beneficial relationship between school libraries and learners' reading achievement.

Librarians help students choose suitable reading resources, promote reading through activities, and work with instructors to integrate literacy skills across the curriculum. The Information Search Process model (Kuhlthau, 2004) supports the librarian's role in empowering students to become good readers and lifelong learners by promoting information literacy abilities. Educators may develop instructional approaches that cater to various learners, embrace digital and multimodal literacies, and harness the resources and experience of libraries and librarians by addressing three major concerns in teaching reading and new literacies.

Innovative Approaches in Teaching Reading and New Literacies

Given the highlighted fundamental challenges in teaching reading and new literacies, let us consider innovative options for alternate courses of action. These suggestions try to solve the issues and capitalize on new opportunities in reading education. Each concept is supported by relevant research and theoretical viewpoints.

1. Implement a balanced literacy approach that combines phonics-based instruction with whole language strategies, providing students with a comprehensive foundation in reading skills

Implementing a balanced literacy approach that blends the qualities of both instructional approaches is an innovative approach to addressing the phonics versus whole language argument. This method emphasizes the necessity of explicit phonics instruction in developing strong decoding abilities while simultaneously emphasizing the development of comprehension techniques and promoting a love of reading through whole language practices. Research, such as that of Moats (2000), shows the efficacy of a balanced strategy in increasing students' reading outcomes. This novel technique encourages a whole-person approach to reading instruction, ensuring that students develop both core abilities and a deep grasp of text meaning.

2. Integrate digital and multimodal literacies into reading instruction through the use of interactive e-books, online resources, and multimedia tools to enhance student engagement and comprehension

Integrating innovative technology and multimodal literacies can improve student engagement and comprehension in the digital age. Students can interact with texts, visualize information, and experiment with various kinds of communication using interactive e-books, internet resources, and multimedia technologies. Students, for example, can immerse themselves in virtual reading environments that bring texts to life by using augmented reality (AR) or virtual reality (VR) programs. According to Clinton-Lisell *et al.* (2023), including digital and multimodal literacies in reading education can promote deeper understanding and motivation. This novel technique makes use of technology to provide students with dynamic and interactive reading experiences.

3. Develop differentiated instructional strategies and interventions targeting diverse learners, incorporating specialized support for students with learning disabilities and English language learners

Innovative varied teaching strategies and interventions can be adopted to effectively fulfill the needs of various learners. This involves offering specialized assistance to students with learning challenges and English language learners. Personalized learning platforms and adaptive technology, for example, can be used to adjust training to particular student needs. Culturally responsive teaching approaches can be used to promote an inclusive and supportive learning environment for all students (Gay, 2018). Vaughn and Linan-Thompson (2007), for example, emphasize the value of tailored instruction in enhancing reading outcomes for heterogeneous learners. This novel approach ensures that every student has the assistance and resources they require to succeed in reading education.

4. Strengthen the role of libraries and librarians in promoting literacy by expanding access to diverse reading materials, organizing literacy programs, and collaborating with educators to support reading instruction

Through innovative programs, libraries and librarians may play a critical role in promoting literacy and supporting reading education. One suggestion is to use technology to increase access to other types of reading materials, such as e-books, audiobooks, and online databases. Furthermore, libraries can create engaging literacy initiatives such as book clubs, reading challenges, or author visits to foster a reading culture and increase student love for reading. Librarians can give professional development opportunities on incorporating new literacies and creative instructional practices into the curriculum by collaborating with educators. According to Lance and Hofschire (2012), school libraries and librarians have a favorable impact on kids' reading achievement. This novel strategy makes use of libraries' resources and skills to build a vibrant reading ecosystem. Educators can improve reading education, empower students with varied literacies, and create an inclusive learning environment that nurtures a lifetime love of reading by applying these innovative approaches.

Evaluating Each Course of Action based on New Literacies

To assess each course of action, analyze how it aligns with the principles of new literacies. New literacies involve the shifting ways in which people interact with and interpret diverse forms of communication and information. Digital literacy, visual literacy, media literacy, and multimodal literacy are examples of these literacies. We can judge the effectiveness of each course of action in educating learners for the demands of the twenty-first century by analyzing its alignment with emerging literacies.

1. Implement a balanced literacy approach that combines phonics-based instruction with whole language strategies

This course of action is consistent with new literacies since it recognizes the value of both traditional print-based literacy and digital literacy. Decoding abilities, which are required for reading both traditional texts and digital content, are supported by phonics-based education. Whole language tactics foster understanding, critical thinking, and the ability to extract meaning from a variety of text types. By combining both approaches, students gain a broad range of reading skills that can be applied to a variety of text types and forms.

2. Integrate digital and multimodal literacies into reading instruction

By adding digital and multimodal aspects into reading education, this course of action directly addresses the principles of emerging literacies. Digital literacy is the capacity to properly explore, assess, and create digital content. Students engage with multiple digital texts and build the skills needed to critically read and produce digital information by integrating interactive e-books, internet resources, and multimedia technologies. Multimodal literacy is concerned with comprehending and creating meaning from several kinds of communication, such as images, videos, and sounds. Students learn to analyze and synthesize information across several media by including multimodal texts and activities.

Recommendation for the Best Course of Action

Based on the review of each course of action, the recommended solution is to establish a balanced literacy approach that incorporates both phonics-based education and whole language strategies, while also stressing the integration of digital and multimodal literacies. This approach recognizes the fundamental relevance of decoding skills and comprehension strategies while also providing students with the skills needed to navigate and critically engage with digital and multimodal texts.

Students acquire a strong foundation in reading by combining phonics instruction with whole language tactics, which includes both traditional print-based books and digital information. Integrating digital and multimodal literacies prepares students to navigate and interact meaningfully with the vast range of texts they encounter in the digital age. This line of action is consistent with the research and theoretical perspectives that support the benefits of a balanced literacy approach (Moats, 2000) and the use of digital and multimodal literacies in

reading teaching (Clinton-Lisell et al., 2023). It offers a thorough and unique approach to reading instruction that equips children for success in today's literacy environment.

4. CONCLUSION

This study critically reviewed case studies on teaching reading and emerging literacies, with an emphasis on DeCandido and Office's "Literacy and Libraries: Learning from Case Studies" (2001). This study attempts to improve our understanding of successful instructional strategies and solve problems in literacy education by examining diverse approaches within the context of developing literacies. The study, which employs a qualitative approach comprising a literature review and case study analysis, provides insights into major ideas, instructional approaches, problems, and novel literacy instruction solutions. Implementing a balanced literacy strategy that combines phonics-based instruction with whole language tactics, with a focus on digital and multimodal literacies, is one of the recommendations. Future studies might look into the long-term effects of these approaches on student reading outcomes, as well as more novel strategies for meeting rising literacy needs in education. Finally, this research provides educators, researchers, and policymakers with evidence-based insights for improving literacy instruction and meeting the different requirements of today's digital learners.

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