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*THE PLACE OF TEACHING READING IN THE BUENOS AIRES CURRICULUM

Santiago Boland

(In Buenos Aires a new curriculum model has been adopted in which reading is seen as a small part of a child's total schooling.)

In 1975, the Ministry of Education of Buenos Aires Province started an experimental project to change the whole curriculum of the Primary School. In December 1980, the new curriculum for the first cycle of the Elementary School was approved as the result of these five years of experimental work.

THREE CYCLES OF THE CURRICULUM

Elementary schooling was divided into three cycles: the first proposes the child's growing up as the centre of the educational activities. The other two cycles introduce the child into a progressively wider view of the world and the culture through four main themes:

My City
My Province
My Country in America
My Country in the World

The cycles are based on Piaget's theories of intelligence and Kurt Lewin's theory of groups. The teaching of reading begins in the first cycle. The curriculum for this and each of the three cycles is articulated around three nuclei, each nucleus focusing on one essential aspect of the child.

THE THREE NUCLEI

1. The child's community.
2. The child's understanding of the immediate environment.
3. The child's way of expression.

The curriculum offers a more specific view of each nucleus in a set of twelve objectives to be pursued through the whole cycle.

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The first two objectives relate to the first nucleus, the child's community, objectives three to seven belong to the second nucleus, and eight to twelve belong to the third nucleus.

Nucleus one, the child's community:

1. To behave with increasing independence and self confidence.
2. To establish positive interpersonal relations in the immediate ambit.

Nucleus two, the child's understanding of the immediate environment:

3. To understand, use and care for the body.
4. To understand temporal relations between neighbouring events.
5. To understand spatial relations between self and objects, between objects, and within the same object.
6. To discover the simplest causal relations in concrete situations.
7. To solve problems operating with number.

Nucleus three, the child's way of expression:

8. To understand and use correctly the local language.
9. To read fluently, both aloud and silently.
10. To write down simple situations that have been seen, heard or read.
11. To express, spontaneously and creatively what has been experienced.
12. To use music as a way of expression and as a means to learning reading and writing.

These twelve objectives allow the child to engage in the whole culture of the community, thought and expression. Each objective is fulfilled at three different levels; the twelve objectives need to be satisfied at each level before the activities of the following level are begun. Most children achieve the objectives at the first level in the first three years at school - from six to nine years of age.

READING AS A MINOR ASPECT

Reading is only a small aspect of the whole curriculum and is seen as an instrument of the thinking child. To be a reader is not more important than to be independent or to be a thinker.

Everyone of us knows that it is easy to teach a six year old child to read. It is a motivational problem, not a developmental matter. If you try you can teach reading to a five year old. What is more difficult is to make him into a reader. To be a reader means more than to encode and decode, to spell and to comprehend; to be a reader means to enjoy reading from the beginning.

The task that we, the teachers of the Buenos Aires Province, attempt is not just to teach how to read but to make reading necessary for the child, and to make a step towards understanding the environment.

Learning to read becomes an activity among many activities such as learning to count, learning to add and learning to dress.

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ERRATA:

The following references were inadvertently omitted from Vol.11 No.1 - B.J. Sayers, *Aboriginal Mathematical Concepts: a Cultural and Linguistic Explanation for Some of the Problems.*, pp. 3-18.

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