Teaching literacy in the zone of proximal development – more than a necessity for children with special educational needs

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LITERACY IN THE DIGITAL AGE
• Zone of proximal development
• Teaching style framework
• Teaching children with special educational needs in Germany
• Utilization of the framework in the context of teaching literacy for children with special educational needs: Description of Case studies
• Scaffolding for writing
• Implications
Teaching in the ZPD

Teaching framework

Mariani 1997
Teaching in the ZPD

Zone of proximal development

Van Lier 2001:190
Teaching in the ZPD

Four Zones of Teaching and Learning

- Learning/engagement zone (ZPD)
- Frustration/anxiety zone
- Comfort zone
- Boredom

Mariani 1997, Gibbons 2015:17
Teaching in the ZPD
Teaching children with special educational needs in Germany, example Freiburg

- specialised schools until 2007
- since 2007 inclusive settings in some schools
- Up to 5 children in an ordinary class
- Special education teacher for 10 hours/week in co-teaching

- Diagnosis
  - Kindergarten
  - During primary school
Case studies

• Longitudinal study (4 years)
• Participant observations of 5 children with special educational needs
• Adaptive theory (Layder 1998)
### Teaching in the ZPD

#### Case studies

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>M (girl)</th>
<th>Lu (girl)</th>
<th>Lo (girl)</th>
<th>M (boy)</th>
<th>Ch (girl)</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Diagnosis</td>
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<tr>
<td>Kindergarten</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3/6</td>
<td>1/5</td>
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<td>Siblings</td>
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<td>Family disadvantage</td>
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<td>Gipsy disadvantage</td>
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<td>Reading skills (4)</td>
<td>3</td>
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<tr>
<td>Spelling skills (4)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Writing skills (4)</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
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<tr>
<td>Literacy (4)</td>
<td>2-3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Example 1
Writing a story
• M (boy)
Example 2
Spelling task
• Ch (girl)
Example 3
Reading out loud
• Lo (girl)
Example 4
Almost any task
• M (girl)
Teaching in the ZPD

Application of the teaching framework

Learning/engagement zone (ZPD)

high challenge

frustration/anxiety zone

high support

comfort zone

good challenge

boredom

low support

low challenge

Mariani 1997, Gibbons 2015:17
Teaching in the ZPD

Scaffolding for writing

The teaching and learning cycle

I
• Building knowledge of the field

II
• Modeling and deconstructing the genre

III
• Joint construction

IV
• Independent writing

Gibbons 2015
# Teaching in the ZPD

## Scaffolding for writing

### Teaching and learning cycle

- Building knowledge of the field
- Modeling and deconstructing the genre
- Joint construction
- Independent writing

### Example

- Walking to the teachers room, talking about the story
- Questions about the story
- Dictated story for the first paragraph
- Independent writing
Es war einst ein Prinz
und sein Lehen
Sie lebten in der Burg,
bis in die Älteren Jahre.

Und einst lag es krum
und die vier Kinder
und die alte Mutter
und die alte Großmutter.

Und einst kam
und die vier Kinder
und die alte Mutter
und die alte Großmutter.

Sie lebten in der Burg
und die vier Kinder
und die alte Mutter
und die alte Großmutter.

Leben Sie noch heute?
Teaching in the ZPD

Application of the teaching framework

- High challenge
- Frustration/anxiety zone
- Autonomy
- Skilled practicing boredom
- Low challenge
- Comfort zone

High support

Mariani 1997, Gibbons 2015:17, Sauerborn i.E.
Teaching in the ZPD

Implications

• Children with special needs. Scaffolding for:
  – Content learning
  – Learning itself/behavior

• Challenge of the right amount of support

• Aim: Autonomous Learner

• What do teachers need in order to offer learning in the ZPD?
Thank you very much for your attention!
References


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