

Summaries in English

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Language awareness in modern schoolbooks; a detailed classification of subject matter

A description is given of subject matter for language awareness in classroom materials, currently in use in Dutch elementary education. The contents of five recently published methods for language education are systematically classified. The classification is hierarchical. At the top there is a distinction between formal, semantic and pragmatic perspectives for language awareness. For each perspective a subclassification has been developed on the basis of the learning objectives found in the materials. The results of the classification lead to the following five conclusions: 1) There is much subject matter for language awareness in the formal perspective, in comparison to the other two. 2) The core objectives of the Dutch national curriculum give no justification for this selection. 3) There are large differences qua selection of subject matter in the five methods. 4) There is very much variety in learning objectives offered, but little opportunity for rehearsal and assimilation of subject matter by the students across the elementary age groups. 5) The selection of subject matter seems rather arbitrary and lacks a clear pedagogical basis. Some recommendations are given to guide a more systematic selection of subject matter for language awareness in future methods for language education at the primary level.

Koen van Gorp

Language Awareness in primary schools

Looking at the language classroom, one cannot but decide that the quality of Language Awareness (LA) in most Flemish and Dutch schools leaves a lot to be desired. In order to develop a LA approach some basic questions have to be answered. What is LA? What subjects do we choose to create a coherent curriculum? Why do we pay attention to LA?

In the article I look at the questions why and how. With respect to why, I look at two important reasons to teach LA. First of all, LA is often seen as having an impact on language proficiency. Research suggest that we should not expect too much of LA with respect to improving the language proficiency of children. Secondly, it is suggested that LA has an important role with respect to learning children to look at the world in a systematic and abstract way.

With respect to how, the traditional deductive teaching approach which still dominates in language methods is viewed critically. An inductive approach is presented. In this language approach children are actively involved in looking at language and discovering language patterns for themselves. The starting point of such activities is not the form of the language, but rather the function or meaning of language.

Rudy Beernink & Bram Donkers

The development of core objectives for primary education

From 1989, the Dutch Institute for Curriculum Development SLO on the authority of the Dutch Ministry of Education developed core objectives for secondary and primary education. The objectives for primary education were revised several times from 1989 until now. Though they were legislated in 1993, in 1996 a new set of objectives was proposed by SLO.

The revisions, at request of the Ministry of Education, in fact were caused alternately by three points of discussion. In the first place: core objectives are meant to describe knowledge and abilities. Why nothing about attitudes? Secondly: how global or detailed do they have to be? Thirdly: do these core objectives indeed represent the *minimum* supply of subject matters of primary education?

In this article, the authors present the short history of core objectives for primary education in the Netherlands. At the end they outline the position of the objectives for education of Dutch language. These objectives were only slightly revised in these years, and represent a communicative view on this subject.