

OXU TƏLİMİ DİFERENSIAL YANAŞMANI TƏMİN EDƏN EFFEKTİV TƏDRİS METODU KİMİ

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ANNOTASIYA

Məktəbdə şagirdlərin akademik hazırlıq səviyyələri fərqli olur və bu da mövcud tədris materialının yüksək səviyyədə mənimsənilməsini təmin etməyə çalışan müəllimlər üçün müəyyən çətinliklər yaradır. Vəziyyətdən çıxış yolu kimi, təhsilverənlər dərslərini daha çox orta statistik şagirdin bilik və bacarıqlarını rəhbər tutaraq tərtib etsələr də, bu, istedadlı şagirdlərin, eləcə də nisbətən zəif hesab olunan şagirdlərin diqqətdən kənar qalmasına səbəb olur. Məqalədə tədris prosesində müəllimlərin üzləşdiyi bu problemin həllinə töhfə verə biləcək model kimi *oxu təlimi (Reader's workshop)* təklif və müzakirə olunur. Bu model oxumağı öyrənmə zamanı şagirdlərə diferensial yanaşmağa, o cümlədən onları fəal şəkildə öyrənmə prosesinə cəlb etməyə imkan verir. Oxu təlimi zamanı təhsilalanlar öz oxu səviyyələrinə uyğun olaraq istər cümlələrlə, istərsə də müstəqil formada oxuyurlar və bu zaman müəllim eyni bilik səviyyəsinə malik şagirdlərdən təşkil olunmuş qrupla işləyir. O bu cür qruplarla iş zamanı dərslərini şagirdlərin fərdi ehtiyaclarına uyğun təşkil etmək imkanı əldə edir. Bu təlim modeli öyrənmək, oxu kitabını seçmək, kitab haqqında yazmaq və fikirlərini yoldaşları ilə paylaşmaq, habelə qrupda müzakirə etmək kimi komponentləri özündə ehtiva edir. Tədqiqatlar göstərir ki, oxu təlimi zamanı şagirdlərin oxu bacarıqları və oxuya münasibətləri inkişaf edir, müəllimlər isə təlimi diferensiaslaşdırmaq üçün müəyyən vaxt qazanır. Məqalənin əsas məqsədi "oxu təlimi" məfhumuna aydınlıq gətirmək, bu modelin komponentlərini müzakirə etmək, eləcə də təlim çərçivəsində müəllim və şagirdlərin rolunu müəyyənləşdirməkdir. Seçim, zaman və çevikliyin oxu təliminin əsas elementləri kimi qeyd olunduğu bu məqalədə öyrənmənin "təlim" şəklində təşkili və müvafiq ədəbiyyatların qısa təhlili də öz əksini tapmışdır. Məqalədə oxu təliminin faydaları və çətinliklərindən də bəhs edilir, eyni zamanda onun müvəffəqiyyətlə həyata keçirilməsini təmin etmək üçün tövsiyələr verilir.

Açar sözlər: Oxu təlimi, diferensial yanaşma, seçim, zaman, çeviklik.

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READER'S WORKSHOP – AN EFFECTIVE TEACHING MODEL IN A DIFFERENTIATED CLASSROOM

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ABSTRACT

Children come to school with a range of literacy experiences and abilities and it becomes challenging for the teachers to tailor the lessons to reach everyone in the classroom. As a way out of the situation, the teachers usually design their lessons to meet the needs of an average learner, and this leads to leave advanced and struggling learners behind. Teachers who teach reading are challenged with administering a grade-level curriculum, usually via a text book, to a group of multi-leveled learners. Reader's workshop is a teaching model which allows students to engage in authentic reading experiences. It is a way to structure a literacy block during the school day that allows for differentiation and a high level of student engagement in the process of learning to read. During Reader's workshop, students read independently and with partners at their independent reading levels while the teacher confers with students and leads small groups. During conferences, the teacher differentiates instruction and designs lessons to meet individual student needs. This literature review examines what the workshop approach to teaching is about and what kind of impact Reader's workshop has on a primary classroom. The purpose of this review is to define "Reader's workshop", summarize the principles the workshop values, talk about the components of Reader's Workshop, as well as discuss the roles of both teacher and students in the Readers' Workshop framework. Benefits and challenges of Reader's workshop are also presented in this review. Research for this review has been gathered from scholarly articles and books about literacy and Reader's Workshop. Choice, time and flexibility have been found as key elements in an effective Reader's workshop. The benefits of Reader's workshop in a primary classroom outweigh the challenges of implementing such a strategy. The article includes recommendations for conducting Reader's Workshop successfully in the classroom, as well as points out the limitations of the research in this field.

Keywords: Workshop, flexibility, time, choice, differentiation.

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INTRODUCTION

Reading is a lifelong skill for everyone and it is important for every literacy teacher to make sure that the students are enjoying what they read. A large number of students are discouraged or frustrated with reading nowadays because they lack confidence or they do not find topics they are passionate about. It is important for the students to see themselves as passionate readers and to have more of a variety of topics they are interested in reading.

Reading is a complex process made up of several interlocking skills and processes. The sum of these pieces is a tapestry that good readers use on a day-to-day basis to process text in their world. The tapestry of effective reading is woven from six foundational threads. Without each thread being present in the tapestry of an individual's reading abilities, there are holes and the weave cannot hold tight and cannot function for lifelong use (Tankersley, 2005).

Reading is a complex experience which engages and motivates students as well as enables them to use prior knowledge to understand and construct meaning from the text.

Students who read well are active agents willing to learn and assume responsibility for their own growth (Taberski, 2000).

Research shows that a child who does not master the basics of reading at an early age is unlikely to learn it later on, and will probably not succeed in other school subjects. One main cause of low-performance in schools is students' low reading achievement (Pettig, 2000; Shevin, 2008).

Herron (2008) noted that "Students who are not at least moderately fluent in reading by third grade are unlikely to graduate from high school" (p. 77), and Lause (2004) found that 65% of the participants in that study do not see themselves as readers and have stopped reading for pleasure.

Thus, an important role of primary grades is to teach students how to become proficient readers.

Most educators expect their students to learn how to read and become proficient and confident readers. Research studies were conducted in different contexts to study the best instructional practices that enable students to achieve the goal of becoming effective readers. However, the findings of these studies show that, in general, attitudes toward reading become negative both in primary and higher classes. One of the reasons behind this is that children learn to read in different ways and at various levels of speed. Pettig (2000) noted that literacy teachers are facing overwhelming concerns to meet the needs of students who have different individual needs. To address reading problems at school, educators consider differentiated instruction as the most practical strategy to meet the diverse needs of students in a heterogeneous classroom (Tomlinson, 1999), a "way of thinking about teaching and learning that advocates beginning where individuals are rather than with a prescribed plan of action, which ignores students' readiness, interests and learning profiles" (p. 108). Differentiated reading instruction helps teachers adjust the curriculum and instruction to meet students' diverse needs, abilities and interests (Tomlinson, 1999, 2000) rather than adopting the one-size-fits-all classrooms (Pettig, 2000) where advanced learners are bored and unchallenged, and struggling students are unmotivated to learn new things they think are too hard (Tomlinson, 2000).

One specific differentiation strategy that was proven to be extremely effective in literacy classrooms is the Readers' Workshop (Keene & Zimmermann, 1997; Lause, 2004; Miller, 2002; Nesheim & Taylor, 2000, 2001; Taberski, 2000).

The Readers' Workshop model supports student-focused reading instruction. This model supports student selection of text and shows more ownership of their growth and attitudes as a reader.

In this article we will try to answer the following questions:

- What is Readers' Workshop and how it is structured?
- How does Reader's Workshop impact the improvement of reading fluency and comprehension in the classroom?
- What kinds of challenges are there for the teachers to conduct Readers' workshop and how can the teachers overcome them?

READERS' WORKSHOP

"Throughout history, a **workshop** has been a physical *and* mental space to organize human learning" (Bennett, 2007). Ways of knowing and ways of being have been passed down from generation to generation through process learning (Murray, 1980). This learning process involves a teacher showing how to do something and the learners trying it out in different ways, receiving feedback from the teacher and their peers and trying it out while taking responsibility for their own learning (Graves, 1991).

In workshop, learning does not happen in isolation, rather, learning is social (Vygotsky, 1978), and therefore, literacy is social (Gee, 2012; Street, 1995). In other words, in a reading workshop; we learn to *do* by *doing* and we learn to read by reading (Smith, 2006).

This workshop environment is characterized by routines and structures that create a safe and comfortable learning environment as students seek to **make meaning** through real reading and writing.

The workshops can be developed through teachers listening to their students, understanding reading and writing as language processes, opening up space for inquiry and discovery, knowing themselves as a reader and as a writer. And modelling for their students how they navigate the world as a reader and a writer (Crawford).

Atwell (1989) describes teachers of workshop in this way: They know and love writing and literature, and they bring this knowledge and passion to their teaching. In conferences and mini-lessons they offer explicit advice that allows students to discover and act on their own intentions as readers and writers, advice students trust because they see their teachers as readers and writers (p.9).

Essentially, the purpose of reading workshop is to promote fluency and to provide time to nurture the love of reading and to learn about texts in a variety of ways. Reading Workshop builds a community of readers as students receive support from their peers and interact with each other to develop good literacy skills.

According to Nesheim and Taylor (2000), the readers' workshop is considered to be a student-centered approach rather than a teacher centered approach to teacher and learning. They also added that within the safe classroom environment in a reader's workshop, students perceive that all readers are valued regardless of their levels of reading.

The reader's workshop uses teaching techniques that prepare self-disciplined learners who are motivated to read because of real interest.

Nesheim and Taylor (2001) explain that a reader's workshop presents a structured literacy community where students are given choices and individual time to read and opportunities to react to what they are reading.

In her book *Variability Not Disability: Struggling Readers in a Workshop Classroom*, Cathy Roller (1996) writes: "Rather than viewing children as capable or disabled, workshop classrooms assume

that children are different, that each child is unique and has special interests and abilities, and that differences are normal" (p. 7).

Many of the key principles of differentiation are embedded in reader's workshop, which makes it an effective teaching strategy to use with students at different stages of reading development. Patricia Hagerty, in her book *"New Directions"* (1992), describes these principles as: **time**, **choice** and **flexibility**.

Time – in reader's workshop, children spend a significant amount of time reading in a natural, unhurried way. In a traditional classroom, the student rarely reads for extended periods. Instead, the whole group usually reads the extract from a textbook together with the teacher.

Choice – It is important to let students select their own materials. Choice leads to ownership. When the students choose their own materials, they are more likely to be involved with it. It means the classrooms should have a large classroom library with a variety of books in different genres, and the teacher should have read all of these books in order to support the children to make appropriate choices. The students won't always make a "perfect" choice each time and learning how to select appropriate reading material is a process that students get better at with practice. Choice is not only about selecting the material. Choices in where they sit and how they read are also paramount in increasing their motivation to read.

Flexibility – "We must give children an opportunity to share their books in different ways. My students respond by writing, talking to one another, and creating projects representative of the books they read." — Richard Wulf-McGrath writes in his article "Making the Difference with Reading instruction" (McGrath, 2000). Flexibility is about how students reflect on their reading and monitor their own progress, receive feedback from peers and teacher and give feedback to others, set objectives and timelines for their reading.

STRUCTURE OF READER'S WORKSHOP

Over the years, reading workshop has moved from a simplistic structure to provide a predictable routine in which students can choose books to read, respond, and share, to a complex structure including, but not limited to: skill-based mini-lessons, independent reading time, center time, guided reading, book clubs, and share time.

In the 1980s, the original Reading Workshop began to emerge in American education through the work of researchers (Graves, 1983; Murray, 1984; Smith, 1987) and classroom teachers (Atwell, 1987; Ostrow, 1995; Rief, 1989). Through 90s and 2000s, the educational practitioners as Cunningham & Allington, (1994), Fountas and Pinnell (1996), Lucy Calkins, Boushey and Moser (2009) developed different variations of Reader's workshop emphasizing explicit skills and strategy instructions. According to these scholars, there is common characteristics of the structure of reader's workshop which can be described as follows:

Reading Workshop is comprised of three components that work together to allow the teacher teach children skills, strategies, and behaviors that will help them grow as readers. Its structure supports children's development because it incorporates both demonstration, guided practice, and individual practice. Here are the three components:

- **Mini-lesson:** The mini-lesson is when the teacher directly teaches the whole class a skill, strategy, or behavior about reading. The teacher models what she/he wants her students to do as strategic readers. The teacher gives the students an opportunity to observe how readers take risks, tackle difficult words, and use strategies when needed. Literacy strategies are practiced as students

read and respond to text. In their responses students may be asked to notice key details and cite evidence from text to demonstrate what they are thinking as they read and respond to literature. Strategies may include predicting, asking questions, citing evidence, making connections, inferring, visualizing, making anecdotal notes, summarizing, and reflecting. An important part of mini-lesson is read-aloud. “There are different ways to invite children into the world of literature, but I believe that the best way to begin is by reading books aloud with children every day and inviting them to share ideas about these books.” (Serafini, 2001, p 56). The mini-lesson lasts approximately 10 to 15 minutes. Cooperative routines are established such as “Turn and Talk”, and “Think, Pair, Share”. Students then transfer the teaching point to their independent text during their independent literacy *Work Time*.

- **Work-time:** Work time is when children read independently. They apply what they have learned in that day’s mini-lesson or in previous mini-lessons. Children are typically reading independently, but they might also be in pairs or in small groups. Work time is the heart of the workshop. It should take up the largest portion of the allotted time for reading workshop and should grow over the course of the year as the children’s reading stamina grows. Work time can look and sound different in each classroom, depending on the children’s age, their reading levels, their language support needs and their grade levels. Nevertheless, there are some common threads one can observe in every workshop classroom. During the worktime, the children are reading independently or with partners from the books that they choose. While the students are reading, the teacher holds *conferences* with a few students every day, gives them individualized attention and instruction that they need. This individualized time allows the teacher to address specific literacy and language needs for each child. Each conference has a focused **teaching point** and ends with a **student goal**. Students can record that goal in their notebook or on a board or form. Instead of meeting students individually, the teacher may meet small groups of students of similar reading ability for instruction. This kind of conferencing is called *guided-reading*. For guided reading, the small group of students who are at the same reading level usually have a book for each week, then the teacher works with the students on the skills depending on what their needs are. These skills are, but not limited to reading comprehension, phonemic awareness, fluency and word work. While the teacher is conducting guided reading, the rest of the students are reading independently, writing a response or a reaction to their texts, complete a character map, explain their thinking, opinion and ideas to their partners. As the teacher works with smaller groups to teach specific instructional needs, this is the time when the teacher differentiates instruction. The differentiation varies from the level of the books each group is reading to the literacy concepts to be taught depending on the book and the students’ level. Work time usually lasts 30-40 minutes.

- **Share time:** While share time is usually the smallest amount of time during the workshop, lasting only about five minutes, it can be quite valuable to both the teacher and the children. Graves reminds us, “Half the fun of reading is sharing what you’ve encountered with others” (Graves, 1990, p. 45). Organization of the share time can differ from individual or partner sharing to small group sharing in order to give each child voice.

IMPACT OF READERS’ WORKSHOP ON PRIMARY STUDENTS (GRADE 1-4)

When crafted with attention and insight into literacy development, reading workshop can build students’ capacity and engagement as readers (Paul, Cruz and Ehrenworth, 2020).

“A readers’ workshop builds on connections between students’ experiences and provides a structured community in which students can share readings as they learn about themselves”

(Taylor & Nesheim, 2001, p. 48). It means it is not just about having your students sit down and read. The children learn a variety of reading strategies and are given considerable amount of time to practice these strategies; selecting the text they want to read.

In a classroom, reading workshop teachers can make the **choices** of real reading available to students, give students **voice** to shape the curriculum, and release students to be **challenged** in self-directed reading.

The principal of New York City Caton School, Elisa Brown believes that Reading Workshop approach to literacy is practical and allows students from all backgrounds to grow as readers, writers and thinkers. "Giving time in school for students to read just makes sense" – she says. (TCRWP, Profiles in Literacy, 2019, p1) Over the past three years, the number of students scoring at the Proficient or Above range has jumped to 67% according to the test scores at this school.

However, we can talk about the benefits of Readers' Workshop on the students based on our conclusions made from different sources. There are very few statistical data on the efficiency of this model. As we lack statistically significant studies showing its effectiveness, there is more space for research in this field.

TEACHER'S ROLE AND CHALLENGES OF IMPLEMENTING READER'S WORKSHOP

According to Lause, reading workshop "enables students to become lifelong readers by combining the study of classic literature with free-choice reading that builds their reading skills" (Lause, 2004, p. 25). Thus, through this model, the teacher is instilling skills in her students that the students will carry with them their entire lives. The teacher's role is to be a "supportive cheerleader" and put books into the hands of the students, as well as keep the communication going about all types of literature. Students begin to want to read within a community; like most adult readers do. The teachers should have a dual focus to determine where the students need to go in their learning according to state standards, but also know where the students currently are in their knowledge base and use of literacy. This understanding of student need helps teachers teach students within the student's zone of proximal development, or "ZPD." The zone of proximal development is the cognitive place where teachers can build on what the student already knows, to get the student to take on new learning through social interaction, or with the assistance of a more knowledgeable other (Vygotsky, 1978). Frank Serafini describes the teacher's role during the workshops as follows: "My role as a teacher in these groups is to listen carefully, respond to what the students are saying, and extend their ideas and connections." (Serafini, 2001, p.102). According to Serafini, every group is unique, and how they interact with each other, and a piece of literature, is unpredictable. The teacher is trying to help the students move beyond the "I liked the book" level. And it happens through sharing ideas, not by asking "critical thinking" questions. (p.102). So, when teacher works with individuals/small groups, the teacher is the group member, the teacher demonstrates how an engaged conversation works, how we enter conversations, how we comment on other's ideas and how we disagree politely.

However, reader's workshop model of teaching might be challenging for the teachers, especially for the newly qualified ones and for those who apply this model for the first time. One of the biggest challenges of readers' workshop is that it is a routine which requires a lot of time and effort to implement successfully (Christie, Enz & Vukelich, 2003). It requires teachers to be more prepared and thoughtful when planning reading instruction. Teachers must be aware of all of their students and their needs, and use those needs to drive instruction and groupings.

In order to create a thriving reading workshop, teachers must **know their students**. Many scholars (Wohlwend, 2011; Kuby, 2013) emphasize the importance of finding out what children are interested in outside of school. This includes the details such as the activities they enjoy, the pop culture they are enamored with, and the kinds of families they live in. Knowing students is the starting point for workshop and it begins with listening to your students.

The best preparation for Reader's Workshop is to **know the literature** that the kids are going to get.

An effective teacher also needs to keep organized, to have thoughtful records of each individual student (Serafini, 2001). All of these preparations might seem to be overwhelming especially if the teacher is used to teach through a certain textbook. However, many teachers agree that all the planning, preparing, observing and hard work pay off in the classroom.

FINAL THOUGHT

Based on the research presented in this literature review, readers' workshop format is an effective way to differentiate instruction, improve students' motivation models, and enhance their reading and comprehension. This approach helps the teacher make decisions based on observations of what students need. Teacher is a learner, too. The students help the teacher learn while the teacher helps them learn.

I believe there are many teachers who can identify pieces of readers' workshop already happening in their classrooms, such as shared reading, read aloud, etc. Therefore, transforming reading classes into Readers' Workshop would be a smooth process if to give a start which, of course, requires good teacher preparation, collection of multiple of resources, as well as good classroom organization. The process would also include avoiding text-books and thinking out of the box. Because, we need to reconsider the ways we "paint" children to fit the school and curricula that we create. By reconstructing the way we teach, rather than trying to get the children to fit into our old teaching models, by thinking more about children's learning than our own teaching, by creating classrooms where the children are at the center of our practice, we are in a better positions to support our children in becoming lifelong readers.

Finally, the "real world of reading" is possible for all of us, students and teachers both. Let's bring this world into our classrooms.

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