

Whole Language

Approach?(34.4)
Philosophy? (23.4)
Belief? (14.1)
Method? (6.3)
Bergeron (1990)

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Background

- Created in the 1980s by a group of US educators concerned with the teaching of reading and writing in L1.
- **"Decoding" language** – focus on teaching separate parts of language such as grammar, vocabulary, word recognition and phonics.

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- **The Whole Language Approach emphasizes learning to read and write naturally with a focus on real communication and reading and writing for pleasure.**
- **it relates to...**
 - CLT (emphasizes the importance of meaning and meaning making in teaching and learning.)
 - Natural approaches (imitate first language learning)

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Approach

Theory of Language

a. Interactional perspective

- Language is viewed as a vehicle for human communication. It is used in a social context in both oral and written forms.

*** **Authenticity** is the key emphasis.

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b. Psycholinguistically, Whole language views language as a vehicle for internal "interaction," for egocentric speech, for thinking.

"we use language to think: in order to discover what we know, we sometimes write, perhaps talk to a friend, or mutter to ourselves."

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Theory of Learning

The Humanistic

Whole language is authentic, personalized, self-directed, collaborative, and pluralistic with the focus on students' attention and motivation mastery.

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• **Constructivist theory**

– knowledge is socially constructed, rather than received or discovered.

– Learners create meaning, learn by doing, and work collaboratively in mixed groups on common projects.

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Design

Objectives : main characteristics

- Use authentic materials, situation, real purposes
- Focus on process rather than product
- Integrated skills
- Student-centered

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Teacher's role

A facilitator and an active participant in the learning community rather than an expert passing on knowledge.

Learner's role

A **collaborator** (collaborating with fellow students, with the teacher and others)

A **evaluator** (evaluating their own and others' learning with the help of the teacher.)

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Materials

Use the real-world materials rather than commercial texts e.g., a piece of literature, newspaper, or student-generated materials

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Teaching of Grammar

Whole Language	Traditional approach
Uses higher skills and authentic language	Sequencing tasks from simple to complex
Instructional interaction between teacher (expert) and learners (novices)	Little interaction b/w teacher and learners, teacher-directed explanation
Richly implicit explanation	Explicit explanation of grammar

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Whole Language	Traditional approach
Encourage performance before competence	Sts must master each step before going to the next step.
Involve in problem-solving task	Passive learner who rarely participate in constructing explanation
Tasks are tuned to a level at which performance requires assistance.	Few questions – mainly rhetorical (words, expressions)
Functional significance before mechanical significance	Often times no functional significance until the end of the lessons

Teacher's Handbook, Contextualized Language Instruction (2003) by Judith L. Shrum and Eileen W. Glisan

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