

Development of Inferencing Skills in 5 to 7 Year Old Children

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ABSTRACT

The present study investigated the development of inferencing in five to seven year old children. The subjects consisted of thirty typically developing children of five, six and seven years, distributed into three groups of ten. Four sets of material were prepared and for each two types of questions were constructed. The questions being of literal and inferential type and equal in number. This was administered on all thirty subjects Male and female were equally represented. The results indicated there was a significant difference in the performance by the five, six, and seven year old children, with the five year olds performing the poorest and the seven year olds performing at ceiling level with the six year olds inbetween them. Thus, indicating a developmental trend in the development of inferencing skills. The findings are discussed using Kintsch's (1988) construction-integration theory.

INTRODUCTION

Inferencing is the cornerstone of reading/listening competence. It is also important for academic success as it plays an important role in integrating texts and discourse.

This skill begins developing early in life. However, studies on the development of inferencing skills in children of the age 5 to 7 years are few. This paper seeks to find out, first, if there are differences in the production of inferences between 5 and 6 year olds who are in the pre-operational stage and the 7 year old children who are just entering the concrete operational stage and; second, if differences exist, can they be explained using Kintsch's (1988) construction integration theory?