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Abstract

In education systems across the world, a shift can be observed from constructivist to social-constructivist positions. This has been accompanied by a new understanding of education which demands changes in the organisation of educational processes. Alongside knowledge transmission, the reformed education systems focus in particular on strengthening children's developmental paths and competencies. Embedded within the wider framework of communicative competence, language acquisition has been attributed a key role.

Approaches towards language acquisition founded on constructivist positions are losing ground and increasingly being replaced by approaches which view language learning as a social rather than predominantly individual process, a process strongly embedded in specific social and cultural contexts. The main didactical approach is that of co-construction, based on integrating models relating to the optimization of learning processes. These focus, for example, on a dialogical approach and on creating a discursive atmosphere in the classroom, on face-to-face interactions, on sustained shared thinking, and on integrating family-related contributions into the curriculum.

Since the beginning of the digital era and Douglas C. Engelbart's invention of the computer mouse, presented on 9th December 1968, and particularly since the introduction of the iPhone in 2007, new technologies have been influencing children's reading competence. Studies in diverse countries report on such processes of change and reveal the consequences for children's reading habits. At the same time, they refer to the chances and risks which such digital technologies bring with them in terms of acquiring language competence. The position represented here is to encounter these technological developments with a critical open-mindedness, and to integrate positive elements into the education system in a more systematic way.