READING MOTIVATION AND READING STRATEGIES IN THE PRIMARY SCHOOL CLASSROOM

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Abstract:

This study discusses reading motivation and reading strategies in the primary school classroom. Several elements that enable students' success in reading comprehension such as conceptual orientation, real-world instruction, autonomy support, collaborative learning, praise and rewards, interesting texts, strategy instruction, evaluation, teacher involvement and cohesion are explained. To promote reading motivation elements of SMILE (S = sharing; M = me; I = importance; L = liking; E = engagement) are illustrated. To sum up, International Children Digital library is presented as another interesting source of reading encouragement.

Keywords: instructional elements, international digital children's library, reading activities, reading motivation, reading strategies

1. Introduction

Reading motivation is the driving force behind reading action. Since it is a key factor for successful learning results, teachers often seek various approaches to encourage and motivate their students. Guthrie and Wigfield define reading motivation as an individual's personal goals, values, and beliefs with the regard to the topics, processes, and outcomes of reading (Guthrie and Wigfield, 2000).

2. Discussion

Motivation is the fundamental element in the reading process, which ultimately results in reading achievement. Guthrie identified 10 instructional elements that form the foundation for engagement and motivation in reading. The first is conceptual orientation, made up of the identification and announcement of knowledge and learning goals and expectations early in instruction. The focus is more on content understanding than on getting the grade. Real-world

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instruction includes reading education that is supported by relevant experiences that stimulate intrinsic motivation, where the spontaneous tendency to seek out novelty and challenges, to extend and exercise one's capacity, to explore, and to learn is focused on. Autonomy support refers to instructor guidance in student selection of meaningful texts to attain established knowledge. It supports student choice of both reading materials and project formats. Collaborative learning involves sharing of perspectives in the learning community. Next element is praise and rewards which has a positive effect on student reading motivation, especially when the rewards are relevant to the learning goals and the praise is properly given, sufficient, specific and sincere. Also, interesting texts are of great importance. They should be in accordance with student reading abilities and provided through collections in school and public libraries as well as in the classroom. Strategy instruction is defined as the explicit teaching of behaviours that enable students to acquire relevant knowledge from text. Specific reading strategies include modelling, scaffolding and coaching. These strategies are intensified by a direct explanation of why they are important and how and when to use them. Evaluation of student achievement should support identified learning and knowledge goals and include a combination of student-centered and personalized activities (portfolios, etc) and objective evaluation (standardized testing). Some portion of the evaluation should be directed toward student effort. Teacher involvement concerns the level at which the instructor is aware of students' personal knowledge and interests, cares about student learning and sets realistic goals for student effort and achievement. The final element, cohesion, occurs when the above instructional elements are used in combination during instruction. Coherent instruction increases student engagement, facilitates conceptual learning from text, fosters reading achievement and helps sustain curricular integration of reading within content areas.

Barber and Klauda suggest using elements of SMILE to promote motivation in the classroom: S = sharing; M = me; I = importance; L = liking; E = engagement (Barber and Klauda, 2020). The S in SMILE explains how sharing or social connections may promote reading motivation and engagement. It is important to strengthen collaboration considering students who share their viewpoints about a text with others are more motivated to read deeply and think harder about the meaning of the text. Methods that encourage collaboration can be used such as reciprocal teaching and collaborative reasoning; discussion groups can also be formed. In reciprocal teaching students become the teacher in small group reading sessions using four strategies: summarizing, question generating, clarifying and predicting. Students are actively involved and they monitor their comprehension as they read. The M stands for me, focusing on how students' perception of 'me as a reader' plays a major role in their propensity toward reading. Students who have reading self-efficacy like confidence in word recognition and comprehension ability, believe that they can succeed in reading tasks and are more likely to put in the necessary effort to make sense of their reading. It is advisable for teachers to help set students reachable but increasingly challenging goals, such as how many new concepts they will learn through reading in a given week. As students reach each new goal, their self-efficacy grows, which helps further build their reading skills. The I in SMILE captures importance, a belief that reading is important and useful in everyday life. Teachers can ask students to write or explain the advantages of a specific reading. The L relates to liking; the committed reader enjoys reading for pleasure without rewards. The surveys show that activities in which teachers

provide extrinsic rewards can weaken intrinsic motivation. Teachers strengthen intrinsic motivation by providing autonomy support as it links their reading to their interests. Finally, E in SMILE stands for engagement, which is the product of motivation. This active involvement in reading is the final product of motivation. Sharing, being an efficacious reader who considers reading important with developed intrinsic motivation lead towards thorough reading comprehension.

An interesting contemporary source suitable for developing reading skills in the primary classroom is International Children's Digital Library (ICDL), an online library, provides its readers access to the best in youth literature from all over the world. I planned numerous lessons using this digital source. Students' feedback was always extremely positive and enthusiastic, they engaged in deep reading quickly. The digital library is available at http://www.childrenslibrary.org/. A collection of contemporary and classic stories awaits readers including action, adventure, fairy tales, games, poetry, songs, science fiction, fantasy and youth novels. ICDL is a non-profit organization. Its mission is to support the children of the world to become successful and full members of the international community who show tolerance and respect for different cultures, languages and ideas by offering these children the best children's literature online for free.

Books can be selected using the Simple search, Advanced search or Location search engines. The user can also create his own account and personal bookshelf. Books can be read enlarged to a projector; this technical option is especially attractive to younger children. In the search engine, it is possible to search by keywords, and interesting information from the story, students have the possibility to find out how many stories are coming e.g., from Africa, the search options are based on the length of the book (short, medium, long), cover colour, book characters (animals, fantasy creatures, children), award-winning and recently added books and according to the age of the reader (3-5, 6-9 or 10-13 years). An additional value of the library is the teacher's manual, where many different ones are offered didactic advice. One option is to read part of the story, and then the students complete the story themselves and illustrate it. If we really want to develop the reader's imagination, we flip through the story in a language that he does not we drive, and then we write a story ourselves that matches the illustrations. Many books are available in several language versions, which gives the possibility of learning foreign languages.

Children, parents, teachers, librarians and others can use the library in various ways. Students can create games from the stories they read, help parents explain important life lessons, actions, teachers can use the multicultural nature of the collection to teach foreign languages, it serves librarians to enrich the local community with stories from around the world and finally, everyone clicks on the book and reads it for reading pleasure.

3. Conclusion

Why is motivation in diverse fields so important? It provides one with goals to work towards. Examining the factors under which students are motivated to read is crucial in the process of teaching. Students will be most engaged when they acquire a variety of motivations rather than just one. Therefore, when intrinsic motivation is low, they can still endure reading activities due

to the fact they are competent readers or have a task value. On the contrary, possessing just one motivation dimension may likely lead to failure when the only motivation element is low. Thus SMILE (share, me, importance, liking, engagement) often in your classroom to encourage motivated and engaged readers.

Conflict of Interest Statement

The author declares no conflicts of interest.

About the Author

Tina Šabec is a professor of English and Slovene. She works as a primary teacher. Her research interests include language learning, classroom dynamics and English literature.

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