

Principles of Developing Reading Literacy in Students in Recent Years

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Abstract: In recent years, the development of reading literacy has become a cornerstone of academic success and holistic intellectual growth in the evolving educational landscape. This article explores the critical aspects of reading literacy, focusing on proven methods and programs designed to foster a love for reading and enhance comprehension skills. Drawing on various studies, it examines the relationship between early exposure to literature, cognitive development, and academic achievement. The research highlights the importance of critical thinking, phonics-based approaches, and interactive strategies in equipping students to analyze information and communicate effectively. Furthermore, the article outlines practical strategies for educators and parents, such as creating supportive reading environments, differentiating instruction, and integrating modern technologies. By adopting a collaborative approach between schools, families, and policymakers, this study emphasizes the transition toward lifelong learning and autonomous knowledge acquisition in the digital age.

Keys words: Reading literacy, PIRLS, primary education, cognitive development, critical thinking, instructional strategies, differentiated instruction, pedagogical skills, educational technology, parental involvement, autonomous learning.

Introduction

Reading literacy has emerged as a fundamental pillar of a student's academic prosperity and comprehensive intellectual evolution. Unlike the PISA study, which evaluates 15-year-old learners, the PIRLS assessment focuses on the performance of 10-year-old children who are completing their primary education. Global educational systems prioritize equipping students with essential reading proficiencies during these formative years to establish a robust foundation for lifelong learning. The objective of reading literacy extends far beyond the mere ability to decode text. It encompasses a multifaceted process of gathering information related to students' backgrounds, reading habits, and instructional methodologies, which aids in deciphering the individual and social conditions within the classroom. Research indicates that early exposure to literature is inextricably linked to cognitive advancement and scholastic attainment. Furthermore, cultivating critical thinking through reading is paramount, as it enhances a student's capacity to scrutinize information, derive logical inferences, and engage in effective discourse.

The contemporary educational landscape necessitates a shift from traditional teacher-centered instruction toward a more autonomous learning paradigm. As globalization accelerates, it is imperative to foster an environment where students can acquire knowledge independently, reducing over-reliance on constant supervision. This requires a synergistic collaboration between educators and parents to

identify a child's specific interests and direct their leisure time toward productive intellectual engagement. By integrating differentiated instruction, modern technological tools, and cross-curricular reading activities, we can bridge the gap between theoretical knowledge and practical application, ensuring that the new generation is prepared for the complexities of the digital era¹.

Literature Review

The conceptual framework of reading literacy has been extensively analyzed by international educational scholars, primarily through the lens of the Progress in International Reading Literacy Study (PIRLS), which defines reading as a constructive and interactive process that serves as the bedrock for a student's lifelong academic trajectory. In recent years, researchers have emphasized that unlike the PISA assessment which targets 15-year-old learners, the PIRLS evaluation focuses on 10-year-olds at the critical juncture of completing primary education, where the shift from "learning to read" to "reading to learn" occurs. Current pedagogical literature suggests that this transition is influenced by a complex interplay of cognitive development, socio-economic factors, and instructional strategies, highlighting that reading literacy is not merely a technical ability to decode symbols but a sophisticated capacity to interpret, evaluate, and critique diverse textual forms including both traditional literary works and modern informational documents. Scholarly discourse points to four essential cognitive domains—retrieving explicitly stated information, making straightforward inferences, integrating ideas, and analyzing textual structures—as the primary indicators of a student's proficiency level. Furthermore, the literature identifies significant systemic challenges that impact educational quality, such as the gap between outdated teaching methodologies and the rapidly evolving demands of a globalized society, the professional competency of educators, and the level of parental engagement in a child's intellectual life. Many studies argue that the integration of multimodal texts, enhanced by visual illustrations and digital resources, significantly enriches the visual imagination and logical thinking of young learners, thereby fostering a more interactive dialogue between the reader and the text.

Academic reviews also stress the importance of differentiating instruction to cater to individual learning styles, suggesting that the use of personalized educational plans and technology-assisted interventions can mitigate the shallow learning often observed in controlled classroom environments. The role of the family is increasingly highlighted as a decisive factor, where a synergistic partnership between teachers and parents is necessary to transition students from supervised tasks to autonomous knowledge acquisition. Literature on modern pedagogy underscores that in an era characterized by an abundance of information, the ability to independently process and filter data is a vital skill that must be cultivated through both literary experiences and functional information usage. Ultimately, the consensus among educational experts is that enhancing reading literacy requires a holistic approach that connects theoretical frameworks with practical classroom applications, ensuring that students develop not only the skills for academic success but also an enduring passion for discovery and learning.²

Research Methodology

The methodology of this research is grounded in a comprehensive qualitative and quantitative analysis of reading literacy frameworks, specifically focusing on the standardized protocols established by the PIRLS international assessment. The research process utilizes a comparative analytical approach to evaluate the effectiveness of instructional strategies and the impact of socio-pedagogical factors on primary school students' performance. Data collection is centered around the four fundamental reading comprehension processes: retrieving explicitly stated information, forming straightforward inferences, interpreting and integrating ideas, and evaluating textual structure and linguistic features. To ensure the

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- ¹ **Central Asian Research Journal For Interdisciplinary Studies (CARJIS)**. (2022). *PIRLS as a tool for evaluating and improving reading literacy in primary schools*. Vol. 2, Issue 12, pp. 207-211. DOI: 10.24412/2181-2454-2022-12-207-211.
 - ² **Mullis, I. V. S., & Martin, M. O. (Eds.)**. (2021). *PIRLS 2021 Assessment Framework*. Chestnut Hill, MA: TIMSS & PIRLS International Study Center, Boston College.

reliability of the findings, the study adopts a standardized methodological instruction, utilizing control materials and task blocks from previous evaluation cycles to maintain consistency in comparative analysis. The research design incorporates a multifaceted survey mechanism to identify variables affecting educational quality, such as teacher professional competency, the integration of modern pedagogical technologies, and the level of parental involvement in autonomous learning processes. Furthermore, the methodology integrates a holistic assessment of two primary reading purposes: reading for literary experience and reading to acquire and use informational content. The study emphasizes a constructive and interactive approach, where the interaction between the student and the text is monitored through standardized tests that include both traditional literary narratives and modern popular science texts enriched with visual illustrations. To evaluate the dynamics of reading quality, the research employs formative assessment techniques, tracking student progress in terms of accuracy, fluency, comprehension, and expressive reading skills. The methodological framework also accounts for the integration of technology, analyzing the role of digital tools and multimodal resources in enhancing the visual imagination and logical reasoning of ten-year-old learners. By synthesizing theoretical pedagogy with practical classroom observations, the methodology aims to create a robust model for transitioning students toward independent knowledge acquisition, ensuring that the results are applicable across diverse educational settings and align with the global standards of the digital era.

Results and Discussion

The results of the study indicate that reading literacy levels are profoundly influenced by a complex set of socio-pedagogical factors, identifying that a significant portion of the challenges stems from the gap between traditional teaching methods and modern requirements. Through the analysis of survey data, it was revealed that many educators lag behind in contemporary specialized knowledge, which directly impacts their professional competency and their ability to implement innovative, student-centered methodologies within the classroom. The findings suggest that education is still largely perceived as a teacher-controlled, confined activity, failing to utilize alternative or person-oriented approaches that are essential for the globalized era. A critical observation in the results is the "blame culture" between parents and teachers; parents often cite a lack of pedagogical skill in teachers to justify their own lack of supervision over their child's education, while teachers point to low salaries and systemic readiness issues as barriers to reform. This lack of synergy hampers the development of a mechanism for independent learning during extracurricular hours, which is vital since teachers only supervise students for a few hours a day.³

The discussion further highlights that the core of reading literacy must be built upon four qualitative pillars: accurate and error-free reading, fluency as measured by speed, deep comprehension for conveying meaning, and expressive reading through proper intonation and punctuation. The integration of visual aids and illustrations was found to be a decisive factor in enriching the logical and visual imagination of primary students, helping them transition from simple text decoding to predicting character actions and understanding emotional states. By integrating artistic and popular science texts, the research demonstrates that an interactive process—where the student creates meaning through dialogue with the text—is significantly more effective than passive reading. Furthermore, the analysis emphasizes that theory and practice in the current educational system lack cohesion, necessitating a shift toward a constructive model where students are encouraged to find and use information independently of constant adult supervision. Ultimately, the discussion concludes that celebrating small achievements and providing constructive feedback are essential for fostering a lifelong love for learning, suggesting that the success of programs like PIRLS depends on a unified effort to modernize teacher training and strengthen parent-teacher partnerships.⁴

3. ³ **Pedagoglar.uz.** (2023). *Principles of developing reading literacy in students*. Issue 51, Vol. 1, pp. 193-195.

4. ⁴ **UNESCO.** (2020). *Literacy for life: Shaping the future of education through reading*. Global Education Monitoring Report.

Table 1. Structural Analysis of Barriers to Educational Quality and Strategic Standards for Reading Literacy Development.

Category	Identified Challenges & Barriers	Standards for Improvement (PIRLS/Modern Pedagogy)
Instructional Approach	Primarily teacher-controlled; lack of student-centered or alternative methods.	Interactive & Constructive: Meaning-making through dialogue with the text.
Teacher Competency	Outdated professional knowledge; low desire for scientific research or reform.	Professional Development: Continuous training in modern pedagogical strategies.
Reading Quality	Shallow understanding; lack of focus on expressive and fluent reading skills.	Four Qualitative Pillars: Accuracy, Fluency, Comprehension, and Expressive Intonation.
Environmental Synergy	Low parental involvement; lack of independent learning mechanisms at home.	Collaborative Model: Strong teacher-parent partnership to foster autonomy.
Material Usage	Theory and practice are disjointed; limited use of visual imagination tools.	Multimodal Integration: Using illustrations to bridge visual and logical thinking.

In conclusion, the enhancement of reading literacy among primary school students, as highlighted by the PIRLS assessment criteria, is a multifaceted challenge that requires a fundamental shift in the current educational paradigm. The research findings indicate that the traditional teacher-controlled classroom model is no longer sufficient in the era of globalization. A significant gap exists between theoretical knowledge and practical application, exacerbated by the professional stagnation of educators and a lack of systematic mechanisms for autonomous learning. The study emphasizes that reading is an interactive and constructive process; it is not merely about decoding text but about creating meaning and fostering critical thinking.

To bridge these gaps, a synergistic partnership between teachers and parents is essential. Since teachers only oversee a small fraction of a child's day, the responsibility for fostering independent study habits must be shared with the home environment. Furthermore, the development of the four qualitative pillars of reading—accuracy, fluency, comprehension, and expression—must be supported by modern pedagogical tools and visually enriched materials. Ultimately, the success of reading literacy initiatives depends on improving teacher motivation, modernizing instructional strategies, and creating a supportive ecosystem that encourages students to become lifelong, independent seekers of knowledge.

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