



# **Promoting Reading Competence in Primary School Age: An Analysis of Didactic Methods**

*Teacher Training Program*

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# 1. Introduction

Educational success and lifelong learning are substantially underpinned by effective reading skills; however, many children are still faced with reading challenges. A cornerstone of primary school education is reading competence, which acts not only as a foundational skill but also as a gateway to success across all academic subjects. This Master's thesis aims to explore the ways in which educators are able to optimize didactic methods so reading competence can be promoted. In addition, an exploration of which factors facilitate or impede students' literacy development is undertaken, with motivation, individualized strategies, and family involvement being among them. A detailed analysis of contemporary instructional approaches, contextual influences, and assessment practices, which are utilized to enhance reading competence in primary school children, is guided by these questions.

Reading competence is understood as the ability of individuals to decode, comprehend, and engage with text, enabling meaning to be extracted and understanding to be applied across various contexts. A multidimensional construct is presented by it, which encompasses phonological awareness, vocabulary development, fluency, and comprehension. A considerable portion of their knowledge is learned by children through reading (Alenizi and Alanazi, 2016), research demonstrates, which underscores the critical nature of fostering effective literacy skills from an early age. However, a significant percentage of children—estimated to be between 10% and 30%—experience difficulties during their early years of schooling (Bents, 2003). Socio-economic background, resource availability, and the quality of instructional methods are among the factors that contribute to these challenges. Both the effectiveness of didactic strategies and the range of external and internal factors that influence children's reading outcomes are addressed in this thesis, which seeks to provide a comprehensive analysis of them.

A critical evaluation of a variety of didactic approaches designed to promote reading competence among primary school students is the primary objective of this thesis. The following core research question is addressed through a systematic consideration of traditional and modern instructional models, the influence of motivation and strategic reading, and the roles played by individualized and differentiated teaching: How can didactic methods be optimized to foster reading competence, and which factors support or hinder this process? Furthermore, an exploration of the impact of family support and out-of-class reading practices is undertaken in this thesis. The interplay between home environments

and school-based interventions is thus highlighted. Evidence-based recommendations for educators and policymakers, designed to strengthen literacy education at the elementary level, are intended to be derived.

The existing literature is thoroughly reviewed and analyzed as part of the methodological framework for this thesis. An assessment of the advantages and limitations of various reading promotion strategies is undertaken through the synthesis of findings from empirical studies, meta-analyses, and theoretical models. Methods which include comparative and historical analysis, as well as critical evaluation of sources, are employed, utilizing both quantitative and qualitative research. For instance, insights into the impact of metacognitive strategies and motivational interventions are offered by studies such as those conducted by Alenizi and Alanazi (2016) and Bates et al. (2016), whereas the psychosocial facets of reading enjoyment are illuminated by Cremin's (2023) qualitative research. Therefore, a comprehensive, interdisciplinary examination of the key issues that surround reading competence is allowed.

Considerable progress, but also persistent gaps, are reflected in current research on reading competence. The importance of early intervention is emphasized by numerous studies, indicating that early reading skills are predictive of subsequent academic performance (Bents, 2003). A promising method has been demonstrated through differentiated instruction, as highlighted by Ankrum and Bean (2008). The benefits of tailoring instruction to meet individual learning needs are shown by their research. A central factor is also recognized as family engagement, with parental involvement correlating with improved motivation and achievement in reading (Clark, 2007). However, disparities in resource access—particularly among low-income or rural populations—continue to pose a challenge to equitable literacy development (Moswane et al., 2021). A contribution to bridging these gaps is achieved through the integration of diverse research perspectives and the examination of actionable strategies in this thesis.

An organized and systematic exploration of the topic is provided through the structure of this thesis. The fundamentals of reading competence, including its core components, stages of development, and individual learning differences, are introduced in Chapter 2. Didactic methods for reading promotion are reviewed in Chapter 3, contrasting traditional approaches such as phonics-based instruction with modern strategies, including digital tools and collaborative reading formats. An investigation into the role of motivation and reading strategies is carried out in Chapter 4, addressing intrinsic and extrinsic motivational factors alongside the implementation of metacognitive and comprehension strategies. Support

systems are focused on in Chapter 5, with an emphasis on both family involvement and school-based resources within the context of fostering reading development. Assessment and evaluation methods are discussed in Chapter 6, including formative and summative approaches in addition to the importance of progress monitoring. The thesis concludes by providing a synthesis of the findings and practical recommendations intended for educators and stakeholders.

## **2. Fundamentals of Reading Competence**

The establishment of effective literacy development is underpinned by a thorough comprehension of reading competence, incorporating vital skills, linguistic advancement, and cognitive mechanisms. The fundamental elements that support early reading achievement are explored in this section, upon which instructional strategies and interventions that are discussed in this work are established. It is together that these insights offer a vital context for encouraging fair and impactful literacy education within elementary school environments.

### **2.1 Definition and Components**

The basics of reading competence are outlined here. In order to implement reading and literacy strategies in primary schools effectively, a broad overview of the necessary skills, as well as the core of the language to be studied, will be provided.

#### **2.1.1 Core Reading Skills**

Core reading skills in primary school refer to phonemic awareness, decoding, vocabulary, and fluency. Phonemic awareness and decoding are fundamental skills that children must have in order to achieve a lifelong love for reading. Research has shown that phonemic awareness and the ability to connect letter names with phonemes during explicit instruction results in effective word recognition for children. These early literacy skills are essential for students to become avid readers (Pfof, Artelt, and Weinert, 2013, p. 4). However, without consistent, structured phonics interventions at an early age, many students from low socio-economic backgrounds who speak different languages find learning to read to be an

impossible and challenging process (Moswane, Foncha, and Abongdia, 2021, p. 3). This finding highlights the need to provide structured and frequent phonics intervention in order to foster positive lifelong readers. Diagnostic assessments, such as phonics screenings, will assist teachers in implementing instruction that builds the foundational skill of phonics. Diagnostic instruction should be provided to students who need supplemental instruction so that they avoid lifelong reading intervention programs. Teachers of multilingual students can improve phonemic awareness by linking instruction to reflect the student's language acquisition as well as literacy knowledge.

Decoding, which correlates directly with phonemic awareness, is another key aspect to address through teaching. Longitudinal research has proved that the skills taught during systematic phonics instruction help students to develop both immediate decoding skills and word recognition. Moreover, fluency skills continue to grow years after explicit instruction occurs (Pfof, Artelt, and Weinert, 2013, p. 4). Therefore, the intentional explicit instruction of phonics, vocabulary, and fluency is important in early years instruction and can have long-term benefits. Evidence has shown that some teachers in certain countries need more knowledge or are unable to access adequate resources, impacting their ability to teach phonics, vocabulary, or fluency instruction (Moswane, Foncha, and Abongdia, 2021, p. 3). As a result, professional development is important to ensure teachers of early years education classrooms are equipped with the tools and resources to successfully and effectively instruct phonics skills to their students. Formative assessments can benefit instruction in terms of providing teachers with appropriate diagnostic interventions for students requiring supplemental phonics instruction.

Vocabulary is another skill that students in primary school should learn. Having the ability to understand word definitions in context is important for effective comprehension, as well as creating words in creative pieces. Evidence has shown the benefit of direct vocabulary instruction of definitions, antonyms, and synonyms as well as of using context in meaningful instructional pieces, for example, creating a vocabulary list of a short story or brainstorming new words and exploring vocabulary in class (González Santos, 2015, p. 35). As students engage with new vocabulary during reading and writing, they learn how to internalize and apply the context of new vocabulary and can transfer that application to broader linguistic domains, such as creative writing (Gavriluț, 2023, p. 6). The ability to implement effective vocabulary work allows students to produce creative pieces using appropriate vocabulary and encourages students to find originality through words and phrasing in their work (Gavriluț, 2023, p. 6). A critique against vocabulary practices such as “drilling” suggests that those learning practices do not assist the process of vocabulary learning, and it is suggested

to implement teaching vocabulary within the context of reading and writing. The learning of vocabulary in such a way allows students to understand new words in context as well as expand the students' knowledge so they can move away from instructional and remedial reading practices (Gavriliuț, 2023, p. 6). Future studies could explore if vocabulary acquisition is more successful when learning it thematically across all subjects as it does allow students to use that information in future writings to extend their knowledge (Gavriliuț, 2023, p. 6).

Fluency is the ability to read accurately and quickly, and with the right pace and appropriate intonation (prosody) for expression. According to research, fluency is best improved by including inclusive and fun classroom activities, such as games and storytelling challenges (Wildová and Svobodová, 2011, p. 2). Classroom engagement builds community between students, allowing them to learn from each other and improve their own fluency. Motivation among students is very effective and fosters positive attitudes towards reading and increases confidence in literacy endeavors (Wildová and Svobodová, 2011, p. 2). An example of this, which is effective in improving fluency, is when a class prepares for a play or musical performance, in which they will present a story digitally (Gavriliuț, 2023, p. 6). Motivation builds positive attitudes in reading endeavors when students have a desire to achieve certain intonation and pace during their performance. Fluency instruction can benefit all students when incorporating games, songs, and collaborative work, yet it is important to know that some learners do require more focused support. When instruction occurs as whole class rather than on an individualized basis, there is a lower achievement made overall from students of primary and elementary age. This highlights the importance of differentiation in the classroom when teaching students' fluency, with supplemental instruction and practice for the student who requires additional work. In addition, silent reading is not the best method of practice and intervention with reading fluency, as students practice fluency orally when interacting and reading with others.

Many educators have started to focus on fostering pre-literacy skills prior to the entry into primary grades. The inclusion of programs that aid reading stimulation in primary students enhances phonological awareness, letter knowledge, oral language development, and phonological working memory. These programs focus on reading stimulation through play and interaction, which, therefore, directly impact students in regards to reading comprehension and fluency (Vasquez Pérez et al., 2022, p. 7). In addition, those early literacy abilities enable children to read and write earlier because those early literacy experiences give them pre-literacy strategies needed for early acquisition. For those children with poorer literacy skills who were involved in these programs, it can prevent delayed development and therefore supports all areas of the child's academic learning as well as

future success. Research conducted on these early literacy programs have also shown the earlier and more intensive the program, the more success occurs. It is important for school professionals to support these initiatives in order to continue supporting literacy interventions (Vasquez Pérez et al., 2022, p. 7). With consistent and strategic interventions from educators during the early years of a child's development, teachers are more likely to prevent future negative effects of low reading literacy, and with further interventions in the child's schooling, it will promote early and lifelong literacy success (Vasquez Pérez et al., 2022, p. 7). However, interventions only in preschool alone may not be effective or sustainable as it requires further support in more school settings. Interventions can be more effective if provided in schools to allow for more consistent and focused practices within the classroom (Vasquez Pérez et al., 2022, p. 7). Further, early interventions at school age would benefit if extended to the communities in which these children spend time. With the combination of multiple contexts (school, preschool, community) in which the support for early literacy can be provided, it can be ensured that each child is being provided with the best and most holistic support during the years in which the brain most needs and accepts intervention strategies to build literacy skills for their futures.

The quality of a teacher has an impact on student learning outcomes. Diagnostic competencies are important for teachers in the primary and elementary years in order to identify early reading struggles in reading skills such as phonics, comprehension, and fluency (Pfof, Artelt, and Weinert, 2013, p. 6). In addition, diagnostic competence is important when planning instruction so that appropriate and individualized instruction can occur in the classroom for students. Assessment-based diagnostic instructional practices enable interventions to take place for specific reading skills and/or levels (Pfof, Artelt, and Weinert, 2013, p. 6). With this knowledge, educators can create the opportunity to intervene for students with reading struggles in order to assist in closing the literacy gaps. Research conducted shows that higher proficiency in the diagnostic assessment and intervention is closely correlated with higher scores in the reading skills area and assists students and their learning gaps (Pfof, Artelt, and Weinert, 2013, p. 6). It is not only important to provide instruction for reading; educators must also have the necessary intervention skills, as intervention is key when assessing diagnostic information for teaching purposes.

Furthermore, diagnosis is an important component in reading intervention strategies; therefore, this is a skill that teachers must also become comfortable with. Diagnostic testing involves reading comprehension, spelling, writing, and phonological awareness. With these categories and areas tested, teachers and practitioners can get information about the child in terms of the child's abilities. With the knowledge that children in schools are becoming more

diverse, having teachers with diagnostic competencies is key. It is also important to note that with teachers becoming more aware and educated in diagnostic practices, teachers become more equipped to provide inclusive diagnostic intervention practices with all students. This is especially important when supporting students within the inclusive classroom, as they all have individual skillsets and needs. The ability for educators to deliver effective instruction and intervention for early literacy skills is imperative. With proper and relevant training, educators can improve their ability to support, diagnose, and treat all of their students' needs in the literacy field.

In summary, core reading skills within primary school include phonemic awareness, decoding, vocabulary, and fluency. These core skills are important for instruction with younger learners so that they can progress in their educational careers.

Humanized Version in German:

### **2.1.2 Language Development**

Language development is important because it increases vocabulary and syntactic skills. Glossary creation with reading material has been proven to be effective in enhancing text comprehension and improving writing performance (González Santos, 2015, p. 35; Gavriluț, 2023, p. 6). However, it is important to keep in mind the activities in which the vocabulary is being implemented to ensure that vocabulary development is directly related to reading and writing rather than being an activity on its own.

Vocabulary depth is related to reading competence, in that, the more the learners are exposed to different words in a variety of meaningful contexts, the more likely they are to enhance their ability to express and understand complex concepts (González Santos, 2015, p. 35). Also, vocabulary knowledge and syntactical complexity may be related to one another. Increased vocabulary exposure leads to a greater ability to comprehend more syntactically complex sentence structures. It would therefore be interesting to investigate the possibility that implementing diverse sentence structures in conjunction with vocabulary development can enhance advanced reading competence. Perhaps certain instructional practices, such as explicit instruction of collocations and idiomatic expressions, have more advantages in developing the readers' higher-order skills than others.

Explicit vocabulary learning during reading activities, such as glossaries being created from text, has the potential to enhance receptive and productive language performance (González Santos, 2015, p. 35). It is thought that the explicit study of vocabulary that has been extracted from a text can support greater retention and implementation, which is required for sustained language development. To further enhance retention, creativity should be intertwined. For example, students could do creative writing with new vocabulary. However, caution must be taken to avoid leading a lesson too much, which can affect students' own creativity.

Syntax acquisition is important for reading comprehension since repeated exposure and exposure to syntactical structures through spoken language enables learners to better understand text at a structural level (Gavriluț, 2023, p. 5). For example, the inability to acquire effective syntax may restrict students' ability to retain and comprehend information, and students need to be able to integrate new information to achieve academic success. By gradually exposing learners to more and more syntactically complex structures over time, teachers can enable learners to begin to utilize these structures intuitively when constructing texts. It should be noted however, that an over-focus on grammar at the syntactic level and without the implementation of functional strategies may hinder the reader's ability to utilize the strategies in text. To combat this issue, it may be helpful to examine the thematic nature of certain syntax and implement it in multiple disciplines.

Oral expressive skills influence reading competence, and vice versa (Gavriluț, 2023, p. 6). Through engaging in spoken communication activities, learners develop vocabulary and syntax and learn the basic mechanics necessary to comprehend and construct written texts. Teachers should strive to include daily speaking and listening tasks in class. This could be done in groups, pairs, or as individuals to promote development for all. Debate activities and group discussions may be implemented as part of daily classroom instruction. This has potential disadvantages when you have learners with varying degrees of linguistic capabilities. More studies in this area will be required to determine the feasibility for multiple learners and how the implementation may be different depending on each learner's level. Technology may play an important role here, in that, language assistance software might provide individualized support while maintaining a group learning setting.

Differences between families in terms of literacy and language engagement play a strong role in language development, which therefore may be a predictor for the future reading competence of children in primary school (Pfost, Artelt, and Weinert, 2013, p. 4). Families that expose their children to books more often are more likely to use language frequently

and support the expansion of vocabulary. Exposure to storytelling, dialogues, and conversations about what is going on around them are effective approaches to enhance a child's vocabulary growth and development of syntax. As a result, it is important to have interventions to support families with children at high-risk levels for low language development. These interventions could be focused on strategies that can support families, such as giving out books, conducting family literacy workshops, or enhancing community library programs. It must be noted that a focus on parental activities alone may not be effective. To mitigate early developmental issues, efforts should be made to address potential barriers, such as parental education and time restrictions, which may require school-based interventions.

It appears that home environments which promote language development and quality linguistic interactions are more advantageous for the development of reading competence over literacy skills such as letter or phoneme recognition (Pfof, Artelt, and Weinert, 2013, p. 4). This implies that family members focusing on meaningful communication as opposed to isolated drills and tasks is most conducive to literacy outcomes in the young. It would therefore be prudent to examine whether the combination of literacy activities (e.g., letter and phoneme recognition) with quality interactions can maximize literacy development in the home.

The development of narrative skills can improve a learner's awareness of language and foster growth for reading. For example, the ability to describe, predict, and explain the events of a story are important foundations for reading comprehension. Retelling, or building upon stories, enables learners to make connections between ideas. Further to this, narrative skills enhance organizational and inferential skills. This is a relatively easy practice to implement at both home and in the classroom, so it should be given greater consideration for implementation in both environments. It is important to note that although narrative is known to have a positive influence on development, more research is needed to establish how this influence relates to learners with different backgrounds and levels of academic success.

Socio-economic disparities can be found to have an impact on language proficiency and development. The availability of resources such as books, parental time reading to their children, and language stimulation may be limited in lower-income households (Pfof, Artelt, and Weinert, 2013, p. 4). School teachers need to be cognizant of these differences and attempt to cater to learners' individual needs and differences within the classroom environment. To meet the challenge of the impact of socio-economic disparity, schools need to be active and diligent by implementing interventions to address the needs that are

presented by these children.

Teachers can implement differentiated activities based on each individual learner's needs and implement interventions in the areas of language. Differentiation is a change made by the teacher that helps modify content, process, and product for the individuals in the class (Titus, 2025, p. 13). For language intervention, Alenizi and Alanazi found that differentiation had a positive impact in support of reading. Students with diverse linguistic backgrounds may be more responsive to differentiated tasks in the classroom (Alenizi and Alanazi, 2016, p. 9). For example, a learner who is struggling with the grammar component of reading may be provided with a syntactically supported activity while other learners may be allowed to interpret a book or write an article. This allows a teacher to be more hands-on in helping those individuals with the greatest needs, while still keeping all learners engaged. To effectively differentiate instruction based on language abilities, teachers need to be well-versed in diagnostics to accurately assess the strengths and weaknesses of their learners (Pfof, Artelt, and Weinert, 2013, p. 6).

Another intervention teachers can implement is teaching and training in metacognition. Teaching the ability to plan, monitor, and evaluate one's own reading can improve comprehension and vocabulary knowledge for students (Alenizi and Alanazi, 2016, p. 9). Training in these skills may help students with any deficiencies in their reading. However, cognitive overload is still a risk and further research is required on which strategies benefit the readers at specific times.

Oral language, or lack thereof, does impact creative writing and comprehension. Oral language skills influence comprehension in all content areas in that an inability to develop language can make it more difficult to read and/or listen. The ability to construct a well-written creative article, for example, can depend on one's competence of expressive skills. Similarly, poor sentence structure may make it more difficult to effectively read and comprehend (Gavriluț, 2023, p. 5; Merisuo-Storm and Soininen, 2012, p. 1). To counteract this, early intervention needs to be given, particularly through oral activities, as oral language is important for creative construction. It is important for educators to utilize intentional instruction of spoken language strategies to meet this need for all learners.

Implementing interactive, text-connected methods in teaching is important to promoting engagement, language development, text comprehension, and higher-order skills. Interactive strategies may enable students to become more analytical since they can actively construct meaning and make inferences through the engagement of the teacher and

classmates. Dialogue and collaboration encourage critical thinking through the interpretation of text and connection of ideas. Furthermore, students have an opportunity to clarify comprehension as well as practice expressive skills through speaking. By discussing and elaborating ideas about text, this promotes student connectedness and awareness. Interactive methods are known to support all areas of growth and motivation (González Santos, 2015, p. 36; Gavriluț, 2023, p. 6). By developing a connectedness to the text, the individual develops critical thinking as the understanding expands. This enables learners to use what they have previously learned to promote higher-level skill acquisition. All the interactive strategies and methods are more effective at improving learner abilities (González Santos, 2015, p. 36; Gavriluț, 2023, p. 6). More research is needed on which methods would be most beneficial based on the student level and socio-economic status.

In conclusion, the effective development of language skills is important for the achievement of reading competence. Vocabulary, syntax, and oral language skills are crucial dimensions of language acquisition, and they work together to facilitate students' ability to interpret written texts. By implementing strategies to encourage a comprehensive scope of language development, educators and caregivers can prepare individuals to succeed in the growing demands of a literacy-based curriculum.

### **2.1.3 Cognitive Processes**

Cognitive processes are vital for the development of reading competence and the successful integration of textual information. Working memory, the temporary storage and manipulation of information, is important for the construction of complex sentences. In sentence comprehension, working memory assists in the interpretation of syntactically complex sentences, enabling readers to integrate decoded words in real time. Insufficient working memory may impede this integration, making it difficult to maintain coherence and impeding creativity when writing (Gavriluț, 2023, p. 5).

While in general, cognitive abilities are a prerequisite for the adequate processing of sentence meaning, insufficient working memory capacity might cause problems in this area. If not addressed properly, this will ultimately lead to a superficial and incomplete level of text comprehension.

Deficiencies in working memory cause significant problems in the ability to analyze text and

comprehend newly encountered vocabulary. When asked to make inferences, students with lower levels of working memory cannot create connections across a text, leading them to provide only surface-level answers to comprehension questions. Consequently, their writing fails to incorporate ideas from the text (Gavriliuț, 2023, p. 5). Additionally, inadequate working memory capacity also hinders the comprehension of vocabulary in context. As a result, learners cannot recall the correct contextual definitions of new words, which severely limits their ability to successfully apply new vocabulary in speaking and writing tasks. Therefore, teachers must recognize the need for pedagogical interventions that promote cognitive processes in the literacy classroom. Instructional strategies which chunk reading tasks, promote the integration of information into prior knowledge, and promote mnemonics provide students with scaffolded support that improves cognitive processing in reading.

Moreover, the association between working memory capacity and reading fluency indicates the significant role of cognitive processes in achieving automaticity in reading. Fluent reading, defined as accurate and expressive reading, requires the integration of decoding and comprehension. To successfully achieve this integration, one must hold decoded words and phrases in working memory to be integrated into a coherent and meaningful picture of the text.

Since the storage of new information depends on working memory, limited working memory will lead to deficient fluency and inaccurate reading. Furthermore, working memory enables one to accurately utilize appropriate intonation, which significantly affects a fluent delivery of a text. It must be emphasized that an effective, fluency-boosting intervention must address both individual practice and group interaction, as well as require multiple rereading opportunities for meaningful consolidation and repetition.

Problem-solving strategies represent a critical element of a reader's ability to comprehend and evaluate new ideas and information and are linked to executive cognitive processes that monitor and direct reading strategies. Empirical research shows that students who report frequently using problem-solving strategies, such as re-reading a difficult section or pausing to clarify confusion, tend to show a high level of reading comprehension (Shen, 2014, p. 3). This study indicates that effective readers may exhibit higher cognitive flexibility and inhibitory control than struggling readers. These readers are also better equipped at strategically applying effective reading strategies. Improving reading comprehension among students with lower comprehension levels requires explicitly fostering their self-monitoring processes so that these effective strategies become automatic.

Direct instruction of cognitive and problem-solving strategies improves reading comprehension levels. Shen, 2014, p. 4, found that after a five-week classroom intervention, the experimental group's reading scores improved significantly. Moreover, it's been shown that effective online learning environments are rich with interactive content that allows for reflection. For example, these strategies include, but are not limited to, text annotations and highlights and/or prompts to pause, reflect, and clarify text. Although research indicates that such strategies improve self-regulated reading skills, care must be taken when implementing these practices. Scaffolding may be necessary, especially for younger students, to help them reflect on their own understanding.

A student's cognitive capabilities are best understood by measuring areas such as processing speed, attention, working memory, and intelligence. Diagnostic abilities are necessary to accurately measure the variation of these individual processes (Pfof, Artelt, and Weinert, 2013, p. 6). By accurately diagnosing students' cognitive processes, it is more possible to adapt lessons based on their needs. This concept relates to the theoretical component of differential instruction since educators can make suitable alterations to teaching based on cognitive profiles. Thus, for the purpose of making differentiated accommodations and adjustments, all teachers must possess strong cognitive diagnostic abilities. If teachers have professional training in diagnosing and adapting based on the individual's specific characteristics, children can significantly improve in reading outcomes.

It is empirically proven that instructional practices that implement differential or individualized teaching approaches have substantial impact on reading. In the Resplandor (2021, p. 10) study, several student-centered instructional strategies significantly and positively affected reading-related tasks. These student-centered techniques that were found to improve reading tasks involved flexible grouping, student reading strategy intervention, and the student choice intervention. One-on-one instruction, small group work, and large group instruction are examples of flexible grouping. By using flexible grouping, the classroom is a place of optimal student-centered activities with individual levels and expectations.

There are several positive impacts that come from using differentiated instructional practices in schools. First, students who are challenged and supported can grow more and accomplish their academic goals within that classroom environment. This creates a classroom that serves to improve students, based on individual needs and academic abilities. As a result, the students can have the ability to grow academically as far as possible. Some examples of differential practices involve having all the students work on the same activity but varying their work based on individualized plans. Students can learn the subject at their own rate.

Another great advantage that comes from using differential practices involves student engagement. In the differential classrooms, the classroom environment creates an interest and student motivation. One student-centered strategy involves alternative assessments for students so they are able to express their understanding through different forms and assessment types. These strategies involve students working on different assignments and engaging with one another.

Differentiated instruction is an educational approach that helps meet all students at individual levels so that there is academic growth and student success in the classrooms. By creating such diverse practices that incorporate the individual student, it allows for positive growth of students and higher academic accomplishments. Also, the student is more engaged due to the individual, positive, and encouraging classroom atmosphere.

Not only do teachers implement cognitive instructional practices, but students' motivation is an imperative factor. Govorova, Benítez, and Cuesta (2023, p. 6) found significant and negative associations between students' enjoyment levels and executive cognitive processes. The findings also indicated that the relationship of reflection with executive processes, like attention and inhibitory control, improved participants' verbal processing speeds. When examining children who are considered good readers, they tend to have high comprehension skills and enjoy reading. In other words, the students enjoy the process and strategy of reading. Therefore, in this case, their cognitive processing is strengthened, leading to effective reading habits.

Research suggests that students who are immersed in such an environment and practice problem-solving strategies like asking questions to clarify their comprehension do not have a lack of strategies and comprehension skills. This type of curriculum benefits the lower-achieving students and supports them in using problem-solving skills and comprehension practices in a more strategic and purposeful way.

In conclusion, cognitive processes significantly affect reading performance and comprehension levels. Teachers must recognize and accommodate the cognitive profiles of their students in order to enhance both reading competence and fluency development.

## **2.2 Developmental Stages of Reading**

Understanding how reading skills develop over time is important for designing effective literacy interventions. This section looks at the key stages children go through, from first learning to read to developing fluency and comprehension. Knowing this allows us to tailor our teaching and early support to help all children succeed.

### **2.2.1 Early Reading Skills**

The development of early reading skills is highly dependent on home literacy practices. For example, regular read-alouds, access to a large assortment of books, and structured reading routines at home are related to significantly improved decoding and comprehension scores. This is because children are exposed to a multitude of words, which directly impacts their phonological awareness skills (Gonzalez, 2013, pp. 22-30). The benefit of read-aloud sessions at home is that young children learn to associate reading with pleasure and attention, which fosters a love for literacy. Nonetheless, the frequency of home routines will depend on consistency and how they are delivered to children (Gonzalez, 2013, pp. 25-26). Thus, it is of high importance to advise parents to incorporate read-aloud practices as an effective home literacy routine to optimize the early reading skills of their children.

The availability of different kinds of printed materials, such as books, newspapers, magazines, etc., has a direct and positive impact on children's vocabulary development. The more printed materials available to children, the higher their willingness to read independently, thus increasing exposure to new words (Gonzalez, 2013, p. 23). This also allows children to develop more fluency in letter and early word decoding and increases vocabulary size and overall knowledge of language (Gonzalez, 2013, p. 22). Furthermore, empirical studies have proven a correlation between a print-rich home environment and literacy. Specifically, NAEP's Reading Report Card states that "students with encyclopedias, magazines, and at least 25 books in their homes scored higher on the NAEP reading assessment than students with any one of those [materials]" (Gonzalez, 2013, p. 22). Moreover, the availability of these printed materials at home depends on a child's socio-economic background (Gonzalez, 2013, p. 75). Thus, it is imperative that all teachers and school administrators ensure that their schools have a vast assortment of leveled reading materials available to all students. Future studies should investigate the impact that digital reading materials available to children may have on early reading achievement in low socio-economic communities.

Furthermore, structured home reading routines enhance reading skills through bonding and increased confidence in early reading endeavors (Pfof, Artelt, and Weinert, 2013, p. 4). Children may feel more motivated to read with consistent support from a caregiver. Reading together regularly also allows families to associate positive feelings and behaviors with early reading skills in children. A reading routine helps to improve children's literacy skills because it gives them more opportunities to decode words by consistently exposing them to print. As mentioned, the frequency and method of these routines should be taken into consideration by parents in order to maximize literacy skills in children. Furthermore, parental engagement in read-aloud routines, for example, can be limited in many homes, and thus some families may need assistance to successfully incorporate reading routines into the lives of young children. Thus, it would be pertinent to implement workshops to help guide families to instill these routine-based early literacy behaviors at home. Further studies could explore the best ways to culturally and ethnically adapt effective home routines to make them applicable to all households.

Another important predictor of early reading skills is the availability of print in the household (Gonzalez, 2013, p. 24). When children are provided with materials such as printed storybooks, alphabet books, picture books, and reading games, and/or have access to newspapers and magazines at home, they are more likely to see reading and writing as something fun that they can incorporate into their daily lives. Having a vast amount of print material available to children exposes them to a large quantity of books as well as to different kinds of genre texts, thereby increasing their knowledge and skills of literacy (Gonzalez, 2013, p. 24). Moreover, studies have found that read-aloud practices have been found to have the most significant impacts in print-rich environments (Gonzalez, 2013, p. 26). However, in order for print-rich environments to improve early reading skills, a wide range of books and materials must be available. Therefore, families of all backgrounds should have equal access to printed materials regardless of socio-economic background. Consequently, policymakers must work to support districts and schools in improving the accessibility of print to socio-economically disadvantaged homes to maximize children's early literacy success.

Home literacy practices have been proven to be strong predictors of children's success in acquiring early literacy skills. However, these practices vary considerably depending on a family's socio-economic status, literacy level, language spoken at home, and many more factors. Due to these discrepancies in home literacy practices, some students enter kindergarten with greater early literacy skills than other children, thereby creating a gap that

must be resolved through literacy interventions. For instance, families with low socio-economic status or low educational attainment, language barriers, or a large family, for example, might lack the resources necessary to provide their children with consistent read-aloud routines, print-rich environments, and other effective home practices to instill positive early reading skills (Pfof, Artelt, and Weinert, 2013, p. 4). Consequently, it is crucial for schools to have interventions in place that can address these literacy gaps.

For example, empirical research has found that students from wealthy families have many advantages over children from lower socio-economic backgrounds that contribute to high early literacy achievement (McVeigh and Lapp, 2019, p. 4). Students who are considered to have wealthier parents/guardians have more books at home, often receive high-quality child care, and most likely get more exposure to read-alouds. Furthermore, a higher education for parents also contributes to early literacy because they are more likely to instill a literacy-based foundation in their children (McVeigh and Lapp, 2019, p. 4). Thus, interventions that would focus on parent engagement as well as the distribution of free books should be employed in low-income schools and/or communities to combat these early literacy barriers. However, work schedules, resources, and language must be kept in mind in order to promote equal literacy benefits across homes with many different family backgrounds. Additional studies should explore ways to improve literacy skills through parent training for diverse family circumstances.

Phonics and decoding were chosen as the first instructional interventions to review because these practices focus on teaching letter/sound associations to build a child's phonological awareness skills to decode words. In addition, one study found no statistically significant difference in early reading comprehension between phonics-based interventions versus other interventions in early childhood (Kuşdemir Kayıran and Karabay, 2012, p. 1). This result indicates that the effectiveness of any kind of instructional intervention is only as good as its implementation. The literature demonstrates that children must be exposed to printed materials, whether at home or in the classroom, on a regular basis to improve letter knowledge and word recognition for early reading skills. Thus, while phonics-based and decoding methods are known to be effective teaching interventions for letter identification and word decoding, the development of other literacy skills is a whole other picture, which brings the necessity for the exploration of additional literacy interventions.

As mentioned, one research study found that there was no statistically significant difference in early reading comprehension achievement with phonics-based and decoding methods (Kuşdemir Kayıran and Karabay, 2012, p. 1). This is significant because in this case, there

was a general assumption, based on the abundance of research on phonics and decoding methods, that they would have a better outcome than other teaching methods used with young children in early reading acquisition. The result of the Kuşdemir Kayıran and Karabay, 2012, research suggests that outside factors, for example, a child's home literacy environment, may play a larger part in reading achievement versus the particular early reading intervention methods that teachers use. Therefore, in addition to phonics-based and decoding methods of early literacy interventions, additional instructional strategies must be adopted by teachers and administrators so that all the areas of literacy development can be strengthened in early childhood classrooms (Kuşdemir Kayıran and Karabay, 2012, p. 5). Furthermore, parents should be trained at school workshops on phonics and decoding to support their children in these areas from home. However, this is based on the assumption that family structures, languages, and home practices are similar across many households. Thus, there is a necessity for schools to investigate the most effective ways to cater school resources for early reading skill development that would address the diverse social, linguistic, economic, and cultural backgrounds of all their students.

Many factors can impact a child's reading performance, with socio-economic status consistently proving to have a very large impact on early reading skills (Kuşdemir Kayıran and Karabay, 2012, p. 5). For example, students that come from wealthy families typically have greater access to more books than students from lower socio-economic backgrounds, thus resulting in more reading/literacy development and engagement at home. Wealthier families may also be able to afford better child care for their children, thereby providing richer environments and literacy opportunities. Therefore, students from high socio-economic backgrounds generally perform better when it comes to early reading skills than students from lower socio-economic families. However, phonics and decoding activities have proven to be effective interventions to enhance literacy skills, although not significantly more effective for reading comprehension compared to other literacy interventions. Thus, this may be beneficial to use in classrooms that have a high number of students that come from lower socio-economic backgrounds, but more work is necessary to combat the other factors that contribute to unequal early literacy progress among children with varying socio-economic backgrounds. Also, there would need to be interventions that could extend outside the classroom since the child is not there at all times. Future research should focus on cross-sector (school-community) partnerships that might effectively address the literacy disparities of children with different socio-economic backgrounds (Kuşdemir Kayıran and Karabay, 2012, p. 5).

Although there was no statistically significant difference among the phonics-based and

decoding instructional strategies when it came to early reading comprehension, the effectiveness of these approaches when used in combination cannot be excluded. Both phonics-based and decoding approaches are excellent in targeting letter identification and word decoding skills in children, which in turn helps build fluency as well as reading comprehension. Both types of strategies help children's literacy skills, especially early reading skills. Although they differ methodologically, they both address similar factors that affect early reading skills of young children. Nonetheless, due to the fact that only these two techniques are incorporated into their strategies, this instructional type tends to overlook vocabulary size, critical-thinking strategies, and other important skills for language growth in early literacy development (Pfof, Artelt, and Weinert, 2013, p. 4). This is where the utilization of additional teaching interventions and/or strategies plays an integral role when focusing on early reading achievement. Thus, incorporating diverse techniques may assist in the enhancement of overall growth of literacy skills for children and may yield different results.

One particular literacy technique is monitoring language development to ensure that educators implement proper instructional decisions for young students. Therefore, active teacher observations and the usage of tools, such as a K-W-L chart, are examples of different monitoring tools that teachers can implement in their instruction to enhance the child's engagement, knowledge, and literacy development. They also provide the teacher with information needed to enhance early language and literary growth. For example, descriptive records are "systematic observations recorded at frequent intervals or at random intervals over a short period of time" (Shaaban, 2001, p. 2). They are implemented as a tool that guides teacher instructions, aids in tracking student growth, and aids in reflection on the individual progress of the learners being observed. The effectiveness of these formative assessment techniques and strategies is to assist students in identifying individual early reading progress (Shaaban, 2001, p. 2). These kinds of formative assessments should be used regularly in schools to ensure literacy development for young students. This includes professional development so that all teachers are equipped to use them for maximum benefit.

Also, independent reading is an important tool in building early reading skills because children are independently absorbing the printed word. Studies have shown that time spent on independent reading is highly linked to accelerated vocabulary development and improved reading comprehension (McVeigh and Lapp, 2019, p. 4). Each child can absorb approximately thousands of words from time spent with their "nose in a book," resulting in enhanced vocabulary knowledge and more rapid development of fluency (McVeigh and

Lapp, 2019, p. 4). According to a survey of schools in the United States by Scholastic, children who spent more time reading on their own outside of school scored high on early reading performance, indicating that independent reading promotes faster literacy and word absorption at the earlier level of reading (McVeigh and Lapp, 2019, p. 4). Consequently, promoting more opportunities for independent reading will enhance the early reading skills for children. Since socio-economically disadvantaged communities often lack printed materials, it would be highly beneficial for teachers to enhance their literacy programs with more books to encourage more reading in schools, and to allow students to check out books to bring home, which would ultimately promote the children's vocabulary size.

Two effective determinants of early reading outcomes are the teachers' diagnostic competence and language support in the home. Teachers who are able to diagnose the appropriate levels and skills of the individual learners, as well as implement the necessary adjustments, achieve the best results in children's early literacy development. This is particularly helpful when there are few books, parents and peers with lower reading levels, or other limited literacy support in the home setting (Pfof, Artelt, and Weinert, 2013, pp. 4-6). The support system and literacy growth experienced within the family, such as access to books and literacy-based events in the home, has significant long-term impacts for success in reading. Furthermore, language is an imperative tool used in supporting children at a very early age with language development that ultimately helps promote a range

### **2.2.2 Fluency Development**

Reading fluency development is a critical step in literacy. It enables students to connect basic decoding skills with comprehension, and it is significantly influenced by factors such as working memory and executive function. When these cognitive functions are not strong enough, learners struggle to decode and read accurately, and genetic predispositions might impair fluency development. For example, 5–10% of children, no matter what culture and language, have problems with reading fluency caused by dyslexia (Zhou, 2024, p. 1). Children with dyslexia will experience difficulties because of the insufficient capacity of their phonological memory and working memory. For this reason, they need to be identified as soon as possible in order to get assistance in school and achieve grade-level fluency.

Working memory has a great influence on reading fluency. Because it allows readers to temporarily store and manipulate phonological representations, it can improve fluency skills.

Through working memory, learners can recall previous sentences, allowing them to link ideas across sentences and adjust their intonation according to their understanding. The better their working memory, the longer the text children can read before pausing, and the greater their overall attention. In contrast, when working memory has its limits, students lose track of what has been said and cannot recall sentences across long text. They also have a tendency of reading in a monotone because they can no longer regulate intonation (Gavriliuț, 2023, p. 5). Teachers can improve fluency skills through this cognitive process by breaking up a long text into shorter segments or helping students recall what has been said by creating mnemonics that help them keep track of sentences across the text.

Similar to working memory, executive function skills have a big influence on reading fluency. Because this cognitive function allows readers to switch tasks, to monitor and correct mistakes, and to inhibit distracting information, proficient readers will have fewer disruptions and are more efficient in their reading (Zhou, 2024, p. 1). In contrast, those learners who have a low capacity to correct, monitor, and control their inhibition will experience a greater amount of interruptions and mistakes while reading, which will impair the reading flow (Zhou, 2024, p. 1). As a result, students with a weaker capacity to control their inhibition will have a tendency to be unable to perform with effective expression. Teaching children to re-read sentences and to assess how well they perform in the text will develop this skill to an adequate level for fluent reading.

Genetic influences on fluency development are seen through developmental dyslexia, which often lasts for many years through adolescence. Some of the typical developing children, 5–10%, might also still experience this struggle (Zhou, 2024, p. 1). If dyslexia has not been taken care of throughout elementary education, by middle school, these students often have deficits in phonological processing, working memory, and executive function. For this reason, children need to be identified in their early ages and provided with the appropriate support for their literacy. Furthermore, research shows that when intervention strategies are provided in the early years of schooling, learners grow to an adequate level of reading (Pfof, Artelt, and Weinert, 2013, p. 5). However, most of these intervention programs focus on improving accuracy in decoding and rate and are often not linked to the underlying cognitive domains (Pfof, Artelt, and Weinert, 2013, p. 6). Intervention strategies can be improved for students by implementing strategies based on the literature review, which showed that students had improved reading comprehension from techniques that focused on improving flexibility, working memory, self-regulation, and other aspects of cognitive development (Pfof, Artelt, and Weinert, 2013, p. 6).

Extensive practice in fluent reading will assist children in developing fluent reading. A common factor of those students who read with fluency is the exposure to books or reading materials at home, which encourages them to practice reading. Children from homes with books often develop reading proficiency faster because reading more at home increases familiarity with text and different words (Pfof, Artelt, and Weinert, 2013, p. 4). Families with the income to buy more books for their homes or parents with higher educational attainment are more likely to support the importance of reading fluency outside of the school environment (Pfof, Artelt, and Weinert, 2013, p. 4). Furthermore, in contrast to low-income homes, wealthy homes often have well-equipped reading environments and resources. School and local community libraries will also help facilitate the development of fluency in struggling readers. Programs that offer book exchanges or free lending books will also help provide students with ample reading practice.

In addition to the importance of having a plentiful number of books and materials, it is also important to note the number of minutes spent independently reading books, especially through grade school (Pfof, Artelt, and Weinert, 2013, p. 4). Research shows that having a sizable collection of books available is a strong predictor for developing fluent reading skills in third graders, because access to plenty of books will support and encourage independent reading (Zhou, 2024, p. 2). Access to different genres of texts and literature will help readers improve reading proficiency, vocabulary exposure, and expressive reading abilities (Zhou, 2024, p. 2). This means that the quantity and quality of resources are just as important as time spent in reading instruction and practices. Many elementary classrooms do not have a plethora of books with different genres that students can use to develop fluent reading abilities. As a result, not every classroom is providing students with the same level of reading support in fluency instruction. Having access to digital books will also provide diverse options of texts that learners can choose from, promoting more time reading and overall reading skills (Zhou, 2024, p. 2). Further research needs to be made to find the best methods of support for digital and non-digital text reading practices in the classroom (Pfof, Artelt, and Weinert, 2013, p. 6).

A similar aspect to promoting fluency development through home support would be through family members reading to students. This will help provide a scaffold to improving students' fluency skills through modeling of prosody and flow while reading. The transactional theory of reading is supported by this because the parent in the role of instructor helps transmit the literacy skills to their child as the learner through their interaction with the texts (Pfof, Artelt, and Weinert, 2013, p. 4). Often, though, those in low-income families are under pressure to work instead of having the time to read with their children. Families can model pacing,

intonation, and expression to improve fluent reading. Furthermore, families with these supports can instill a love of reading as children see family members reading independently (Pfost, Artelt, and Weinert, 2013, p. 4). Having parents reading with students also gives a different outlook and perspective of how learners can read the same book that they are reading. This will allow students to develop different perspectives on the same texts they have read previously.

Fluency can be improved with early and consistent reading practice and home supports. These factors can all contribute to improved fluency skills because independent reading and reading to others will strengthen skills in comprehension and oral reading performance. Those students who have exposure to different book materials at home are exposed to new vocabulary words and are also provided with more reading opportunities (Pfost, Artelt, and Weinert, 2013, p. 4). Independent reading allows children to control what and when they read. This can help encourage the repetition and review of new words in the context of the entire book, helping readers maintain information more effectively (Zhou, 2024, p. 2). This in turn helps support fluent reading skills because learners can read without the need for constant disruptions.

Many fluency development interventions have been identified and used in classrooms. Researchers have made improvements to their methodologies by developing intervention strategies that integrate cognitive aspects into their interventions in order to enhance reading comprehension skills (Pfost, Artelt, and Weinert, 2013, p. 6). Both qualitative and statistical analyses were conducted to address fluency development programs in primary classrooms (Vasquez Pérez et al., 2022, p. 5). For example, in Yarinacocha, Peru, it was found that when children received intervention strategies from 4–5 years, their literacy skills began developing to an adequate level (Vasquez Pérez et al., 2022, p. 7). In this intervention, preschoolers focused on reading and singing rhymes from common songs that most were familiar with. All activities emphasized phonological awareness activities, while the rhymes were read aloud several times (Vasquez Pérez et al., 2022, p. 7). Students received direct instruction of the rhymes and the rhythm of the song while also being instructed to repeat the texts and rhymes several times until they were reading fluently and expressively (Vasquez Pérez et al., 2022, p. 7). Results showed that it was indeed possible to develop fluency with systematic intervention strategies, even with linguistic and cultural barriers (Vasquez Pérez et al., 2022, p. 7). Intervention strategies focusing on early childhood education need to address skills in all reading domains in order to better equip children for reading growth. The McNemar test was used in the analysis to show statistical significance in children making significant gains and reaching the same skill levels for reading fluency (Vasquez Pérez et al.,

2022, p. 6).

Fluency intervention can be a tool that helps improve the capacity of children to develop appropriate cognitive functions (Pfof, Artelt, and Weinert, 2013, p. 6). As a result, learners who have higher levels of these skills will be more efficient in controlling reading, reading rate, and accuracy of decoding, as discussed in this review. In addition, teachers that incorporate these diagnostic and instructional abilities will significantly contribute to the prevention of reading failure (Pfof, Artelt, and Weinert, 2013, p. 6). These results signify that teachers that assess, diagnose, and provide explicit instructions of different literacy skills will help improve all aspects of the reading process. Furthermore, if teachers can model and implement fluent oral reading practices through strategies such as repeated readings or scaffolded oral support and assessment strategies, learners can improve the rate, prosody, and accuracy when reading aloud (Kaya, 2014, p. 2). Developing strategies for teacher education and professional development can also improve their instructional skills through modeling and explicit instruction of fluency development activities.

The level of familiarity and explicit instruction also plays a role in developing fluency skills. Studies of teachers have revealed that most were not familiar with contemporary children's books that are of high quality. This meant that most students were not being provided a plethora of book materials that supported the development of reading fluency in the classrooms (Kaya, 2014, p. 2). Many scholars believe that when teachers bring in more diverse genre texts and books, their students develop higher motivation and are more fluent readers (Kaya, 2014, p. 3). As a result, teachers and teacher education programs need to focus on improving teacher practices to create an environment that is rich in literacy resources. Teachers need to have exposure to an eclectic collection of books to help aid student proficiency in reading (Kaya, 2014, p. 3).

A recent study suggests that musical triads can help improve reading fluency, especially among students with dyslexia. Musical triad interventions and activities will support the synchronized neural activity and rhythmic processes that help improve and increase rhythm recognition abilities of readers, ultimately leading to increased fluency development (Di Paolo and Zappalà, 2024, p. 9). Combining this technique with activities that are typically used, such as decoding and phonics instruction, will not only develop the rhythmic and prosodic components of fluency but also the accuracy of decoding (Di Paolo and Zappalà, 2024, p. 9). These techniques can be integrated into activities by having students read out loud while also patting a rhythm to help with prosody skills. The overall purpose of implementing a combination of rhythm techniques with typical phonics will help to provide

the student with a variety of ways to learn and build skills in fluency. Further research is warranted to discover whether these strategies will show a significant effect size for fluency development in all groups and ages of students.

### **2.2.3 Comprehension Development**

The explicit teaching of reading strategies is crucial to enable students to move beyond literal interpretation of texts, and according to research, the use of summarizing, clarifying, and predicting strategies are effective techniques that aid in reading comprehension. Baier (2005, pp. 43-45) has found that following the introduction of reading comprehension strategies, the test scores improved up to three grades in both sixth grade and college students, with an average group gain of 21.92%. Although such improvements indicate that these strategies prove effective, it is unclear whether they can be effectively implemented and sustained over time, especially in the context of scarce resources and short instructional time. Further studies are needed to assess whether the efficacy of these techniques lasts even under circumstances with limited resources.

By becoming more aware of when their comprehension breaks down and correcting their interpretations of texts, students develop metacognitive capabilities (Baier, 2005, p. 45). Teaching strategies to students on how to evaluate their reading and comprehension is a beneficial technique as well as something that the teacher can utilize by modeling and scaffolding metacognitive awareness strategies. A weakness to using these strategies is that they depend heavily on the teacher and their experience. These techniques would not benefit the student if the teacher has little to no experience, as they must model the strategies for their students, while at the same time, the students must actively implement those techniques as well.

Teachers must provide adequate modeling and scaffolding of the strategies and slowly release the responsibility to the students, allowing them to build confidence. For younger children, it is even more important for the teacher to model the strategies and engage in scaffolding by slowly releasing responsibility to them, as without adequate support, they are likely unable to think and act like expert readers or have any conscious or unconscious understanding of these processes (Baier, 2005, pp. 43-45). These strategy-based lessons must be implemented daily rather than once a week as evidence shows that reading skills require reinforcement through daily instruction. Achieving this level of consistency may be

difficult when there are children of various ability levels in one classroom. This challenge also depends on the limited amount of instructional time in a classroom to begin with.

These strategies can also be used with all different types of reading texts, making it a helpful skill to have. When students can transfer learned comprehension strategies to other text forms, it is more than just academic and leads to more motivation and willingness to read. The issue that comes from this is if the text is less familiar or the reader does not read many types of different text genres.

Motivation has a great influence on reading comprehension abilities and is important to improve because research has proven there is a direct and significant effect of motivation levels on comprehension scores. Kuşdemir and Bulut (2018, pp. 1, 10) claim reading motivation accounted for 12–13% of the variance in reading comprehension scores among primary school students. Furthermore, the more time that families spend reading with their children is another component that promotes positive comprehension results. Students with a lower family motivation level and do not have their families actively motivated to encourage or motivate reading tend to perform lower on close and open-ended reading tests (Kuşdemir and Bulut, 2018, pp. 6-7). Even though researchers are finding connections that directly affect motivation levels with comprehension, further research is needed to examine more in-depth into this relationship between reading motivation and comprehension.

High intrinsic motivation levels affect the levels of cognitive engagement in students as well. Therefore, when high intrinsic motivation rates are prevalent, the student displays greater persistence, greater strategy use, greater analytic and interpretive skills, as well as being a more eager learner. All of these components make it important for teachers to motivate their students to encourage their motivation in reading. This can be done through motivation instruction and intervention, choice in text selection, interest-appropriate reading materials, and the recognition of student performance and effort. Teachers must be knowledgeable and aware of the components needed to properly instill motivation in their classrooms. However, a negative component of motivation interventions is that it has been hard to find one strategy to reach every student, especially when the motivation comes from their home life. It can be seen that teachers and researchers are not able to instill motivation within the home life, because motivation is an individual thing.

Researchers are finding there is also a difference of motivation across genders as well. Male and female motivation levels tend to have significant differences where male motivation scores are significantly lower than the female scores (Kuşdemir and Bulut, 2018, p. 6).

Therefore, female students often outperform male students because they are more motivated and actively engaged in comprehension activities.

The shared reading strategy has proven benefits in both reading interest and comprehension for readers when compared to students taught using standard methods in the classroom. The results in the research by Muegues Rodríguez and Colina Chacín (2023, pp. 1, 4) found that the creative and innovative methods of using shared reading increased the motivation for both the readers and the writers and helped improve their reading and writing skills more rapidly using checklists. The strategy of shared reading benefits children by creating an active, interactive, and social setting where the students are actively engaged in discussion. This allows the learners to do collaborative reciprocal teaching as they learn from each other. However, in heterogeneous classrooms, students may be different regarding their oral language proficiency and their level of ability, and these classroom dynamics are important to keep in mind so the shared reading will be more efficient.

Researchers are exploring different creative ways in implementing shared reading in the classrooms to aid reading comprehension for students, such as collaborative and innovative ways of telling stories (Muegues Rodríguez and Colina Chacín, 2023, p. 1). There is one main weakness that is brought forth when implementing shared reading practices in the classroom. Even though it does have many benefits, it is important to note that it is a time-consuming strategy and also demands experience on the part of the instructor. With the demands of a teacher within an individual classroom setting, it might be hard to implement this instructional practice frequently.

Teachers often provide diagnostic tools for reading comprehension strategies such as structured checklists and rubrics that assess performance to assist student needs with comprehension. Diagnosing the child will benefit him or her so the right tools and resources can be presented, allowing for the improvement to take place. Teachers can then diagnose and implement changes as they are seeing the need for the individuals and the classroom as a whole. One pitfall that the teacher can fall into with this instructional practice is that there must be time for the teacher to accurately reflect on and change the needs for the individuals. Teachers must be willing to engage in this type of reflection for the betterment of all students.

Reading practice done outside of school by students will also improve comprehension abilities. Independent reading is a vital part to increase and develop comprehension levels for students and aids the child in creative writing, increases student vocabulary, enables the

student to utilize sentence and text organization, and also gives them a better grasp on using grammatical cues within their reading. Gavriluț (2023, p. 6) found that by consistently spending 30 or more minutes of reading per day, students display stronger outcomes and skills. The difficulty that has been found in this domain is that sometimes the students do not have materials readily accessible and also need familial support. This can limit this instruction greatly for the benefit of students.

Furthermore, integrating creative and collaborative technological devices and software has been another route taken with instruction and practice of reading outside the home. Gavriluț (2023, p. 7) has found that this has led the students to become more motivated to actively engage in comprehension learning. Despite the fact that the implementation of technology may be very beneficial in this instructional domain, technology may not be available for all students to access and therefore the instruction may be limited.

It is of vital importance to assess and identify any difficulties that primary school students are exhibiting in regards to comprehension. Without the evaluation and intervention in the primary grade levels, 75% of poor readers in the third grade will remain poor readers through the ninth grade and beyond (Farrall, 2012, p. 2). Various techniques such as the implementation of Informal Reading Inventories, Phonological Processing Tests, and much more were included to adequately assess and address children with comprehension problems (Farrall, 2012, pp. 2, 6). One of the critical keys to success in this instructional domain is teachers. Teachers need to have the proper instruction and proper background in order to diagnose the students and then provide the instruction the child needs to improve. It is also vitally important to have the appropriate school resources within the community to allow for these strategies to improve the child.

In conclusion, explicit teaching of reading strategies, motivation to read, use of shared reading practices, promoting independent reading, and frequent assessment of comprehension abilities are all vitally important domains that have a great impact on reading comprehension development for individuals.

## **2.3 Individual Learning Differences**

The configuration of reading development among primary school-aged learners is significantly shaped by individual learning differences, with both the outcomes of

instructional methods and the specific support strategies that are required for diverse groups being influenced. The progress of individuals in reading is centrally determined by variations in cognitive abilities, such as working memory, attention, and executive function. Persistent reading difficulties often result from deficits in these cognitive processes, necessitating targeted interventions. For example, the capacity of a learner to decode texts, integrate newly acquired vocabulary, and comprehend complex sentences is directly affected by working memory. Fragmented understanding and slower fluency development can result from limited working memory, with students struggling to process and retain information efficiently, as emphasized by Gavriluț (2023, p. 5). Furthermore, challenges in sustained engagement with texts may arise from attention deficits, undermining comprehension and the ability to build connections between ideas. The skills of task-switching and self-regulation, which are encompassed by executive function, are equally critical, supporting error correction and adaptive learning during reading tasks. Teachers' diagnostic competence is essential in recognizing these cognitive disparities and implementing strategies to address them, as highlighted by Pfof, Artelt, and Weinert (2013, p. 6). Differentiated scaffolding or task modification, tailored to learners' specific profiles, needs to be employed by teachers, such as breaking down tasks into manageable steps or providing frequent breaks to support attentional needs. Instructional responsiveness can be further enhanced by reflective teaching practices and professional development focusing on cognitive diversity, ensuring that students' unique cognitive challenges are met effectively.

The implementation of proactive interventions is allowed for by the early identification of students' cognitive strengths and weaknesses, which can mitigate the risk of entrenched reading deficits. For instance, additional practice with phonemic awareness and other foundational literacy skills benefits children with limited attention or executive function difficulties. The importance of recognizing these challenges early in a student's development to provide targeted support is underlined by Pfof, Artelt, and Weinert (2013, p. 6), which can significantly improve reading trajectories over time. The burden on working memory has proven to be eased by incorporating instructional adaptations grounded in cognitive science, such as chunking and the use of graphic organizers, while comprehension is simultaneously enhanced (Gavriluț, 2023, p. 5). The necessity of evidence-based strategies at both individual and classroom levels to accommodate diverse learning needs is illustrated by these measures. Moreover, the sharpening of diagnostic skills should be emphasized by ongoing teacher development programs to better detect and address cognitive diversity, particularly in resource-limited settings where individualized support may otherwise be constrained.

The determination of a student's reading achievement is significantly influenced by their socio-economic background and the quality of their home literacy environment. A strong correlation between socio-economic status and disparities in reading competence has been established by empirical research, with children from underprivileged families often demonstrating weaker reading skills at school entry. For example, richer literacy environments tend to be provided by families with higher incomes or educational attainment, offering diverse reading materials and frequent opportunities for language engagement, which are critical for vocabulary development and reading comprehension (Gonzalez, 2013, p. 22). By contrast, constraints such as limited access to books, fewer shared reading activities, and reduced parental involvement in literacy practices may be faced by children from socio-economically disadvantaged backgrounds. More sustained impact on later reading achievement tends to be had by general language support at home, including activities like storytelling and conversational interaction with varied vocabulary, than narrowly focused code-based drills, as argued by Pfof, Artelt, and Weinert (2013, p. 4). Structural inequalities exacerbate these disparities, as families with fewer resources are less likely to provide the enriching language experiences crucial for fostering early reading competence. A compensatory role must be played by schools through the implementation of programs that address these inequities, such as distributing free books or creating targeted literacy initiatives for low-income families.

The influence on children's reading outcomes is amplified by the qualitative aspects of family literacy engagement, demonstrating that the nature of interactions matters as much as, if not more than, the frequency of exposure to print materials. Motivation and curiosity in children are fostered by parental modeling of enthusiastic and engaged reading behaviors, encouraging them to view reading positively and as an enjoyable activity, for instance (Eke, 2011, p. 4). The mere presence of books in the home is gone beyond by such practices, as vocabulary growth and comprehension skills are actively nurtured. Parental encouragement and responsiveness to children's questions during shared reading sessions significantly enhance their cognitive and linguistic development, as noted by Gonzalez (2013, p. 75). Not only access to books but also strategies to enrich the quality of shared reading experiences should be emphasized by literacy interventions targeting families, these findings suggest. Systemic solutions, such as partnerships between schools and community organizations, could bridge the resource gaps faced by many families, ensuring equitable access to literacy support across socio-economic lines, additionally.

The diversity of individual reading engagement and competence is further exemplified by gender-based differences. Research consistently shows that girls outperform boys in reading

tasks, a pattern attributed to higher levels of reading engagement and the broader range of text genres that girls tend to explore (Longo, 2007, p. 36). The lowest reading rates among PISA participants are exhibited by boys, particularly in cultural contexts such as Germany, indicating that their underrepresentation in voluntary reading activities may stem from motivational factors rather than innate ability. These patterns are often shaped by sociocultural expectations and peer influences, with boys perceiving reading as less aligned with traditional notions of masculinity. Instructional strategies that cater to diverse interests should be designed by educators to address this disparity, such as incorporating competitive or collaborative elements that resonate more strongly with boys. Enhanced engagement for students who might otherwise lack interest could occur, for instance, by offering student choice in text selection and introducing genres like graphic novels or adventure stories. Implicit biases in classroom culture and representation within reading materials also need to be critically examined by teachers to create an inclusive environment that values diverse identities and preferences.

Effective means of accommodating varied learner profiles are provided by didactic methods incorporating differentiated instruction and strategic use of students' first language (L1). Teachers are enabled by differentiated instruction to tailor reading activities to individual readiness levels, linguistic competence, and interests, ensuring that tasks are appropriately challenging and accessible (Pfost, Artelt, and Weinert, 2013, p. 6). For multilingual learners, the integration of L1 support has been shown to scaffold understanding and facilitate the transfer of literacy skills to the language of schooling. Nearly 70% of classroom time involving L1 use led to measurable improvements in vocabulary and grammatical competence, González Santos (2015, p. 9) highlights. A sense of belonging is fostered by using L1 strategically within instruction, and the cognitive overload often experienced by learners navigating unfamiliar language structures is reduced. Cross-linguistic transfer is further promoted by activities such as collaborative storytelling and the creation of structured glossaries, making literacy instruction more inclusive for linguistically diverse learners. However, ongoing reflection and assessment of language use in the classroom are vital to maintaining a balanced approach that meets the evolving needs of all students.

The ability of educators to address individual differences is closely linked to the effectiveness of reading comprehension instruction. Many teachers feel underprepared to teach diverse reading strategies, leading to an overreliance on assessment rather than instruction, Navarrete (2019, p. 1) emphasizes. Students with distinct learning needs are disproportionately affected by this gap, who may struggle without adequate strategy support. Comprehension can be significantly enhanced by implementing evidence-based approaches

like Collaborative Strategic Reading (CSR), particularly in heterogeneous classrooms. Students are allowed by CSR to engage more deeply with texts, regardless of their starting proficiency, incorporating techniques such as brainstorming, key idea identification, and self-questioning (Navarrete, 2019, p. 3). Moreover, teacher professional development programs should prioritize equipping educators with adaptive strategies that cover multiple levels of comprehension, including literal, interpretive, and evaluative dimensions. Instruction should be guided by frequent formative assessments, ensuring that targeted interventions address specific skill gaps and foster incremental progress. Diversity-sensitive instruction must remain responsive and adaptable, recognizing the unique learning trajectories of all students.

In conclusion, a comprehensive and multifaceted approach is required when addressing individual learning differences in reading development. Responsive and inclusive instructional strategies are necessitated by the interplay between cognitive diversity, socio-economic factors, gender dynamics, and linguistic backgrounds. Their diagnostic and adaptive capacities must be continually refined by teachers to meet the diverse needs of their learners effectively.

### **3. Didactic Methods for Reading Promotion**

A variety of didactic methods are utilized within literacy education. The next pages will explore these varying approaches to literacy education and their impact on young readers. Positioned within the wider context of literacy, the following section will explore literacy education and various literacy education strategies used within primary education.

#### **3.1 Traditional Teaching Approaches**

In this section, some basic, tried-and-tested pedagogical methods will be discussed that are crucial for literacy instruction. They all work in a conscious and structured manner. Phonics-based and whole-language methods are examined here and are considered in the context of effective reading promotion strategies.

### **3.1.1 Phonics-Based Instruction**

Phonics-based instruction is a systematic method of teaching the relationship between letters and sounds and is a key to early literacy development. Scientific evidence proves its effectiveness in developing vital decoding abilities in primary school children (Gersten et al., 2007, p. 21). However, such instruction must be implemented consistently, and fragmented programs may cause variations in learners' word recognition competence.

For effective phonics-based instruction, learners must show appropriate reading readiness. Such readiness is not merely the ability to engage in literacy activities but also learners' cognitive, socio-cultural, and emotional readiness. Literature has identified several developmental factors of reading readiness, including cultural, mental, physical, linguistic, and social factors (Alufohai, 2020, p. 4). Children with an abundance of oral language tend to have higher phonemic awareness. Therefore, teachers must know the children's maturity and develop each child according to their needs and interests. The role of adults and children's interactive communication in language development is also significant. The size of vocabulary known by the children has a critical influence on their literacy development.

Assessment has a significant influence on phonics-based instruction to determine the language and literacy development in learners. Communicative and descriptive approaches (e.g., phonological awareness assessment and decoding progress charts) are often employed (Shaaban, 2001, p. 1). The K-W-L chart (What students know, what they want to know, and what they have learned) can also be used to determine their progress in phonics-based instruction (Shaaban, 2001, p. 2). A detailed record of progress will guide teachers to monitor student learning.

Motivation and engagement are essential factors in learning phonics. Phonics-based instruction often emphasizes explicit skills, yet it can enhance learners' engagement and outcomes if combined with extensive reading of materials of interest. It is recommended that students have extensive reading activities that connect with their hobbies, interests, and experiences to foster both fluency and reading skills. Evidence indicates that participants of phonics-based instruction integrated with interest-driven reading exhibited stronger motivation, reading skills, and achievement (Permatasari and Wienanda, 2023, p. 4).

Although the research on phonics-based instruction has documented substantial gains for many children, it has some limitations, particularly for children with persistent difficulties and

multilingual learners. Randomized controlled trials have shown varying results. Several phonics-based interventions significantly boosted English acquisition for learners. However, others had limited effects (Gersten et al., 2007, pp. 27, 44). Therefore, it must be used along with other approaches like vocabulary development and structured peer collaboration. The results of the meta-analysis suggest that instruction with peer pair or group activities positively impacts literacy outcomes, particularly among students with language barriers (Gersten et al., 2007, p. 40). As a whole, phonics-based instruction is highly effective when implemented and accompanied by other language development methods such as small group work to provide a scaffolding learning environment for diverse learners.

### **3.1.2 Whole Language Approach**

The whole language approach is guided by the idea that literacy is acquired more effectively through experiencing and understanding whole texts than through isolated instruction of particular skills. A key feature of this method is the use of creative writing and the integration of activities with authentic texts to develop vocabulary, sentence structure, and idea organization. Gavriliuț (2023, p. 6) indicates that tasks in this method increase the learners' level of creativity, and therefore increase their enthusiasm for language and communication lessons. Creative activities promote a sense of ownership by the student, allowing them to build connections between reading and writing, thus also enhancing their vocabulary and improving the structure of their sentences. However, the question must be posed as to whether this experience is sufficient on its own, especially in circumstances where explicit instruction in phonics may be needed.

Collaborative and interactive practices are at the core of the whole language method, with shared and dialogic reading being just two examples of how students actively participate in their own learning, thus boosting their interest in the learning material. The method is particularly suited for the multigrade classroom. According to Muegues Rodríguez and Colina Chacín (2023, p. 1), the shared reading experience done in a creative and motivational way will ensure that the learners maintain enthusiasm to read. However, it should be noted that not all schools are adequately prepared or supported for the successful implementation of creative and motivating methodologies.

Short stories also have a natural place in the whole language approach. González Santos (2015, pp. 34-35) states that short stories can help students develop clarity and accuracy

when forming sentences, as well as learn new vocabulary. Students can also create glossaries from the new vocabulary learned in the story.

Digital tools also have a place in the whole language approach, which embraces communication and interaction. The benefits of iPads on the creativity of learners and their enjoyment are discussed by Gavriluț (2023, p. 7), and collaborative digital storytelling is a method that helps motivate students in their interest in both reading and writing. Not all students have access to digital resources, and therefore educators must ensure that such opportunities are accessible for all in order to equalize learning.

Finally, in the whole language approach, motivational levels influence outcomes of collaborative and integrative methods. Wulandari, Ansari, and Hadi (2020, p. 1) indicate that students who are more motivated respond better to collaborative models of learning when reading. This raises some questions, as strategies may need to be employed to motivate students to be more engaged in their learning so as to improve the outcomes.

While the whole language approach enhances creativity and develops the students' ability to communicate fluently, it tends to omit direct instruction in decoding and phonics skills. The whole language method is more focused on meaning than on skill, and although reading for meaning is an important aspect of the learning process, it may exclude those students who need greater support for developing their decoding and phonics skills. This is particularly true of multilingual students or those at risk, who often require explicit teaching in phonics. When used in conjunction with direct, explicit skill-based instruction, this communicative approach can facilitate literacy learning in primary schools.

In summary, although the whole language approach provides opportunities for authenticity, engagement, and participation, its effectiveness relies on careful and considered implementation that does not exclude student motivation, diversity, and the need to develop essential skill-based literacy.

Humanized Version in English:

### **3.1.3 Balanced Literacy**

Balanced literacy is a mixed instructional approach in which the learners in primary

education are exposed to a combination of phonics-based and whole language methodologies to meet each student's needs. By integrating explicit phonemic awareness instruction and decoding skills with authentic and motivating texts, a diverse method is used for diverse learning profiles. Various shared reading strategies have been applied in multigrade classes for the creative and motivational purposes of promoting the interest of reading and, in this way, fostering reading competence. Even though this balanced literacy method is more inclusive, it must be well implemented to ensure that the skill is well developed.

As mentioned, balanced literacy attempts to reconcile skill-based reading instructions and opportunities for authentic and relevant text reading. Such an approach is a means to support the development of strong early literacy foundations that make sense in the context of learners' experience and interests. As Pfof, Artelt and Weinert (2013) and González Santos (2015) suggest, it is essential to sustain the training in phonemic awareness and decoding with rich texts so that students apply what they learn in meaningful contexts. As such, this strategy in multigrade classrooms can also be considered a method that attends to a range of students' linguistic and intellectual differences to promote equitable educational opportunities. Thus, it is imperative to analyze how well this balance is maintained within instruction.

The method of instruction that balanced literacy promotes is differentiated with respect to content, instructional speed, or teaching pace, or groupings of learners. Responding to student motivation and progress has proven a positive trend. Muegues Rodríguez and Colina Chacín (2023) argue that by incorporating motivational, interactive, and playful activities, students that initially had low motivation for reading and/or low skills are stimulated to improve their literacy skills significantly. The challenge for the teacher lies in assessing individual literacy needs and motivation levels and delivering the teaching materials accordingly to produce the most equitable gains.

Within a balanced literacy methodology, diagnostic and formative assessment tasks are used to inform instructional decisions. By looking at student progress during formative assessments, educators can determine who may benefit from more intensive instruction in explicit phonics and who need to be supported by rich, contextualized language experience. As such, these assessments allow the teacher to effectively address the literacy needs of diverse students. For Shaaban (2001), formative assessment provides insights to enable targeted teaching that effectively addresses children's literacy needs. Pfof, Artelt, and Weinert (2013) argue that formative assessment practices should be done on a regular basis

to improve students' vocabulary acquisition and support teachers in implementing more efficient interventions. Thus, these practices assist teachers in monitoring the development of literacy skills among diverse learners and adjusting instruction in ways that better meet those individual needs. However, the effectiveness of formative assessment tasks requires the educators to be adequately trained to implement them correctly and interpret the data to provide responsive instruction to a diverse learning population.

Within the framework of balanced literacy methodology, using narrative-based or contextualized activities is an inclusive strategy that assists in addressing some of the differences among learners in a classroom. By reading and working with short stories, students have improved grammatical competence and vocabulary skills. It is evident that even reluctant readers get excited about them and actively participate. As González Santos (2015) argues, the tasks of creating glossaries and thinking about vocabulary are essential for developing students' sentence structure and expressive abilities. Moreover, engaging in narrative-based and contextualized activities are valuable ways of promoting creativity and personal connection. Yet, it is critical to consider whether the needs of low-skilled learners are truly being met through narrative-based tasks and if these strategies alone adequately address their areas of low competence in literacy.

This literacy strategy offers opportunities for creative writing in the classroom. Learners in primary education improve their grammatical competence by creating narratives. These narratives improve technical skills and connect learners personally to texts and increase their willingness to participate in reading and writing tasks. González Santos (2015) demonstrates that through narratives, students develop and express ideas while at the same time learning language techniques. However, such activities must have purpose and connection to lesson content for all participants to be equally successful.

Implementing short stories promotes students' active participation and makes them share opinions in class. Learners in primary education are motivated to collaborate and exchange experiences. All of this reinforces positive attitudes towards reading. Muegues Rodríguez and Colina Chacín (2023) argue that strategies such as motivation and interaction that make the class more appealing for students help to develop reading competence. Short stories also lead to greater vocabulary acquisition because the contextual clues offered in this genre encourage learners to retain new language. Nevertheless, to effectively promote the motivation and engagement of diverse learners through narrative, careful and skillful planning for and facilitation of activities is essential.

It has been widely claimed that this methodology is a useful approach for multilingual and multicultural classroom settings. Narrative-based and contextualized activities also prove to be a good resource in inclusive classes. These activities offer entry points for many students with a range of language levels and experiences. It is noted that when integrating learners' L1 in narrative-based activities, vocabulary development and comprehension are more effective, as argued by González Santos (2015). However, educators must be conscious that for this strategy to be inclusive and address diversity, well-informed instructional decisions need to be made.

Additionally, this methodology seeks to promote engagement of girls and boys in reading activities through various genres and themes of texts. According to Longo (2007), "Girls and women read more widely and more texts on a wider variety of subjects than men." Providing diverse reading options promotes active engagement in the learning context and allows children to be exposed to different contexts, situations, and types of language, thus reducing gender-related gaps. However, as with all reading strategies, the benefits that students can take from the strategy must be regularly examined, and the appropriate changes in classroom practices should be made to better assist and respond to the needs of both male and female children.

This balanced literacy methodology is highly inclusive in heterogeneous classrooms due to the great variety of skills and levels of competence that students have in literacy. As discussed by Longo (2007) and González Santos (2015), literacy is not a one-size-fits-all approach and varies in learning paths. To ensure an appropriate instructional response to this heterogeneity, the classroom must incorporate both the integration of skills (phonics) and text reading in balanced ways. This ensures that learners who are highly competent in certain skills can still have opportunities to connect with text, and, likewise, for students who can comprehend well, there are also appropriate activities and learning experiences that explicitly teach reading skills. However, if the classroom setting is not equipped with all these elements, this balanced literacy methodology cannot address these differences effectively.

Balanced literacy allows educators to promote home-school literacy connections. By exposing children to rhymes, chants, songs, and other oral traditions, teachers encourage parent involvement in promoting reading fluency through sharing books. This approach embraces families' cultural diversity by introducing meaningful literacy activities from various home settings. Research suggests strong connections between literacy practices at home and student test scores, behavior, and cognitive ability at school. Ordoñez-Jasis and Ortiz (2006) note that parental expectations for their child's educational progress, encouragement,

and participation in learning activities at home are positively linked to a child's development. Nevertheless, parents should be aware that they need to be involved, and the teachers also need to be aware that they must work in conjunction to meet each student's needs.

Integrating home and school literacy experiences increases language development, attitudes, and habits of reading. When parents/caregivers read to children, the children tend to develop more positive attitudes towards reading and learning new words, which leads to better habits and skills in reading and vocabulary acquisition. These dialogic approaches enhance vocabulary and engagement, supporting literacy skills development. Studies show that parents' ability to identify new vocabulary words while reading to their children helps develop vocabulary at an early stage, according to Ordoñez-Jasis and Ortiz (2006). If children come into school with limited or inadequate literacy experiences at home, they will have difficulty developing skills to succeed in school. The home plays a crucial role in supporting literacy success by providing exposure to language, books, and activities that motivate them to continue reading. It is essential to encourage parents to read with their children and develop their literacy knowledge.

The effective strategy that this balanced literacy method promotes is to teach in such a way that assessment, dialogic reading, and collaborative activities support each other, ensuring the effectiveness of interventions for diverse learners with different motivation or abilities. Muegues Rodríguez and Colina Chacín (2023) state that with these strategies, children stay interested in reading and improve reading skills. Additionally, they can develop creativity and acquire vocabulary. They believe that this is also important for those students that struggle in reading. However, to ensure that teachers are able to promote balanced literacy instruction correctly, they must master certain skills or knowledge that enable them to know the right mix.

Using formative assessments assists educators in deciding which practices would be more responsive to diverse learners. According to Shaaban (2001), teachers use formative assessment to monitor their students' understanding and to decide the next direction of their instruction, in addition to providing support and feedback. These assessment tools have a critical role in determining the types of interventions and support students require. It is critical to ensure that the teacher is adequately trained to use such assessments effectively.

Through balanced literacy, children can engage in collaborative learning and the building of positive learning communities. When children actively collaborate in reading activities, they learn to think together, explore different perspectives, and take responsibility for their

learning. The collaborative and social nature of learning activities can be especially beneficial in addressing linguistic diversity in the classroom. Muegues Rodríguez and Colina Chacín (2023) suggest that collaboration provides motivation to enhance their abilities, promotes positive attitudes, and prevents negative emotions. For this strategy to promote the engagement of a heterogeneous group of students, careful planning to allow this participation and interactions between classmates are vital.

Balanced literacy requires that teachers have deep knowledge of this method as well as digital literacy and skills in order to select, integrate, and present digital literacy resources effectively. González Santos (2015) argues that digital resources have many possibilities to create a favorable classroom environment for reading and learning, and these reduce the barriers to reading in diverse learning profiles and improve learners' attitudes towards reading. Through carefully planned tasks and interventions, learners' participation is increased and enhanced. Therefore, implementing an appropriate blended methodology will increase the impact on the learners' ability to read. However, for teachers to be able to combine these elements together successfully and make sure that they are all present, they need to continue to be provided with professional development.

In summary, balanced literacy provides teachers with a way of thinking about literacy, teaching, and learning in the heterogeneous early education classroom. With effective intervention strategies, it promotes opportunities to engage diverse literacy learners in learning situations that are most productive, supporting their diverse profile. However, it takes careful preparation, attention, and professional development for teachers in order for all of these elements to be equally presented and used within instruction.

### **3.2 Modern Teaching Strategies**

In order to explore modern literacy teaching methods, this section examines a multitude of techniques that are being utilized and are stimulating active learning. It investigates traditional and digital methods of teaching, as well as other contemporary methods, and shows how they provide interactive, collaborative, and motivating lessons. This helps position the proposed methods into the overarching field of teaching.

### **3.2.1 Interactive Reading Methods**

Interactive reading methods have been used as very effective strategies for motivation and reading comprehension within primary schools. Research has demonstrated that shared reading and dialogic reading activities can be used to motivate students within multigrade settings. For example, the implementation of creative shared reading tasks improved children's interest (Muegues Rodríguez & Colina Chacín, 2023, p. 1). This suggests that a variety of interactive strategies should be used in order to meet the diverse needs of students within the classroom.

The interactive reading strategies also require to be adapted in order to meet the learners' varying learning needs as students will be operating at diverse levels within the class. The use of activities such as shared reading and dialogic reading allows for inclusion within a classroom by tailoring these interactive activities for students with different levels of linguistic development. In order to achieve this, teachers would need to adapt materials to incorporate diverse levels of language acquisition and reading strategies, ensuring that the material is still interesting for learners (Muegues Rodríguez & Colina Chacín, 2023, p. 1). Even though this can assist diverse learners to improve their levels of engagement, motivation and reading comprehension, the availability of teacher training remains vital to improve teachers' ability to adequately implement interactive activities.

The benefits of interactive reading methods can be improved by ensuring that group or dialogic methods are used to improve children's engagement. Participatory approaches motivate the learners through socio-cultural aspects as children engage with other learners (Muegues Rodríguez & Colina Chacín, 2023, p. 1). By encouraging the class to respond together, motivation can be enhanced as students learn from each other. However, motivation is not always guaranteed through the use of collaborative or dialogic teaching strategies because classroom dynamics influence the efficacy of these strategies. The implementation of diagnostic strategies like reading checklists enhances interactive reading through real-time feedback, but this requires high levels of expertise from educators (Muegues Rodríguez & Colina Chacín, 2023, p. 4).

The effectiveness of interactive reading methods can also be enhanced by introducing an element of creativity within tasks. This can be done by incorporating motivational storytelling techniques into shared reading activities and creative approaches to text analysis (Muegues Rodríguez & Colina Chacín, 2023, p. 1). These strategies would need to be adequately incorporated so that children can enjoy creative methods within a limited time frame.

An intervention conducted in a primary school context in Peru, used a statistical measure (McNemar) and identified significant improvements to children's literacy abilities using a reading intervention with interactive methods (Vasquez Pérez, Vasquez Pérez, Vásquez Díaz, & Hernández Díaz, 2022, p. 7). The study suggests the importance of using a highly structured interactive approach that allows students to respond through creative and interactive means. This allows all students to participate and improve their motivation and reading abilities. However, implementing these reading interventions on a grander scale is a challenge.

Interactive reading methods also possess qualities of cross-cultural adaptability and appear to be valuable for diverse learners. The Peruvian intervention conducted interactive reading methods for three weeks and noticed a great impact as evidenced through the statistical test (Vasquez Pérez, Vasquez Pérez, Vásquez Díaz, & Hernández Díaz, 2022, p. 7). Implementing cross-culturally adaptive reading intervention may depend on teacher training opportunities available to improve their ability to engage with interactive reading methods for a significant duration of time.

Additionally, motivation plays a crucial role to improve the effectiveness of interactive reading methods. Literature for the Reading Recovery program shows that 50% of those treated showed considerable improvement in their level of achievement in reading, while motivation was identified as a contributing factor that influences improvement of achievement in all interactive programs (Bates, Vantini, and Dwyer, 2016, p. 3). The reading recovery program showed a treatment effect of .31 and this positive response to motivation was also noticed by teachers after posttest. This is further supported through the use of mediation data to understand the treatment effect in program success. In mediation analysis, motivation becomes a mediator variable for achievement. Results suggest that greater reading motivation results in stronger gains in reading achievement. This literature has implications to highlight the importance of interactive methods to improve motivation levels in order to lead to improvements in levels of achievement in reading. However, one of the limitations remains children with the least motivation.

The demographics of the Reading Recovery program also highlighted how interactive reading interventions are useful for a wide range of learners from low SES and minority backgrounds. The treatment showed progress made for students who were identified as at risk due to being African American, African, or those of low socio-economic backgrounds (Bates, Vantini, and Dwyer, 2016, p. 8). It appears that using intervention strategies in

programs like the Reading Recovery improves motivation across cultures in low socio-economic areas to aid progress of reading.

Literature on motivation and reading indicates that even after intervention, many learners continue to have high levels of motivation for reading activities. The data from post-intervention (6 weeks) and follow-up (one year) suggests the treatment provided high gains in motivation for reading activities. Overall, studies show a significant increase in motivation scores in the treatment posttest and a sustained level of motivation one year after the program ceased. It appears that interactive activities and resources help build motivation even after the activity ceases and this allows the impact to last until one year. Motivation plays a crucial role within interactive reading methods to improve engagement as it fosters learning, improves motivation to read and leads to increased reading success. However, strategies require to be continued or new ones need to be introduced as motivation is an ongoing process to improve reading achievement within learners.

Another interactive method is through activities which improve oral reading abilities by engaging learners in interaction activities such as role plays, simulations, and improvisations. When students perform these interactive activities in group settings, it allows the teacher to monitor levels of development and provide instruction in the areas that require assistance, such as vocabulary, grammar, syntax and reading comprehension (Cojocnean, 2012, p. 3). This supports diagnostic teaching that addresses any identified barriers to development. Oral skills can easily be integrated and differentiated in the classroom using flexible group activities and allow the child to operate at an ability level that provides comfort, not frustration. Oral reading activities that occur collaboratively also give the teacher opportunities to address oral abilities and improve the learner's confidence when reading aloud. Oral reading allows for the learner to engage in communication in the classroom in a realistic way that provides purpose and allows them to have meaningful conversations with their teachers and peers (Cojocnean, 2012, p. 3).

This strategy also helps with identifying early difficulties in learning how to read so that strategies can be implemented at the right time to help the learner overcome these reading barriers before they escalate and affect the learner further (Cojocnean, 2012, p. 3).

However, these interactive methods of teaching literacy and the integration of oral reading in the classroom must consider the needs of each individual, especially when teaching in the multigrade classroom or heterogenous classroom. Differentiated groups should be implemented based on needs, text choices must be at a level that motivates and creates

interest, and the pace of teaching needs to match the abilities of each learner, considering the developmental age of individuals.

These are not the only challenges teachers will have to be aware of. Resources such as ongoing professional development for teachers are required for the effective implementation of interactive methods for learners, ensuring that all classrooms are set up to provide literacy growth and improved learning in a diverse range of classrooms and individuals.

### **3.2.2 Digital Learning Tools**

The integration of digital learning tools in primary reading has received considerable attention due to their potential for enhancing student engagement and learning. Studies show that when iPads are used for creative writing, children have positive attitudes towards language learning. Similarly, Gavriluț (2023, p. 7) revealed that interactive digital storytelling had a significantly positive effect on students' attitude towards reading as well as creative writing ability. This shows that digital tools can be used for skill development as well as for encouraging positive attitudes toward learning. Yet, the question is raised whether this is feasible on a large scale.

The equivalence of reading outcomes for print books and e-books indicates that the format does not affect reading comprehension, and Zhou (2024, p. 2) argues that learners have a similar reading experience from digital tools as that of print. The author also believes that digital tools are useful because of their functional equivalence to traditional ones, and they should not be used to substitute traditional learning methods but rather as supplementary tools in the classroom. This claim demands more research on how different students experience digital tools.

Digital learning tools are valuable in promoting individualized instruction by differentiated pacing, feedback, and by providing access to a wide range of texts to learners of diverse abilities. Pfof, Artelt, and Weinert (2013, p. 6) found instructional adaptability crucial for meeting the diversified needs in classrooms. Nevertheless, the importance of sufficient teacher training is still necessary to support students' learning.

Digital storytelling and technology-based collaborative activities have enhanced learners' motivation for reading, and according to Gavriluț (2023, p. 6), interactive digital storytelling

produced a significantly higher creative output. In addition, digital tools can boost learners' intrinsic motivation through interactive activities such as answering questions and games, as this can foster children's motivation for voluntary reading (Pang et al., 2003, p. 13). Children involved in digital storytelling often display more creative skills and critical thinking, as they can share different perspectives. However, are children in all schools provided with the same opportunities to practice digital skills, and are we over-reliant on digital resources?

Digital tools as an access to those who lack motivation. Digital devices can stimulate children's creativity, and they provide a valuable access for them to create. In line with this, the research by Gavriluț (2023, p. 6) supports the use of digital learning tools in improving students' attitudes and cognitive gains in the domain of reading comprehension. Nevertheless, could the use of digital storytelling be effectively applied on a school level?

The impact of digital tools on fostering motivation for voluntary reading can also be seen in group projects where the application of technology allows students to communicate with each other. This facilitates cooperation, negotiation, and conflict management (Gavriluț, 2023, p. 6). It is worth asking whether these collaborative activities are inclusive for all learners, even those with limited ICT literacy.

Digital learning tools are important in the development of foundational literacy skills. Research has found a significant relationship between oral vocabulary and the acquisition of early literacy skills such as phonological awareness (Pang et al., 2003, p. 8). By integrating multimedia resources, digital tools provide repetitive and intensive support of early literacy. However, will children miss kinesthetic or tactile interactions for the acquisition of literacy skills when using digital tools?

Apps created to improve children's phonological skills are designed to be individualized and responsive, offering immediate feedback on students' performance, and at the same time enabling content adaptation to their needs. This type of intervention is in line with the concept of instructional adaptability as described by Pfof, Artelt, and Weinert (2013, p. 6). Still, there is limited research on whether this leads to improvements over a long period or on other potentially limiting factors.

Apart from helping pupils acquire and extend early literacy skills in the classroom, digital learning tools offer various opportunities for motivating children's out-of-school voluntary reading. Cremin (2023, p. 2) mentions that regular out-of-school reading enhances vocabulary, general knowledge, and psychological well-being. Zhou (2024, p. 2) argues that

print and e-books are functionally equivalent. Due to the lack of easy access to books outside of the school, digital books can be a practical resource to maintain children's reading habits at home. Moreover, digital tools have the ability to cater for the varying needs of individual learners, and they are also beneficial to promote voluntary reading, regardless of whether children choose to read on devices or not.

There is a need for adequate and effective professional training on digital literacy for teachers. Zhou (2024, p. 2) also agrees that professional development enhances teachers' level of digital literacy, enabling them to evaluate digital resources and to conduct technology-enhanced formative assessment.

A comprehensive school-wide intervention on digital literacy combined with teacher training may be particularly effective to improve the progress in reading attainment for those students who are unable to learn independently because they are experiencing motivation or resource-related obstacles.

In conclusion, the effective integration of digital tools in primary reading depends on the ability of teachers to carefully and appropriately design and choose digital resources that can motivate and develop learners' reading skills.

### **3.2.3 Collaborative Reading Activities**

Collaborative reading activities are the practices of peer-assisted reading circles and small-group comprehension tasks to co-construct meaning and provide support for other readers. These activities are cooperative because students take responsibility for the overall understanding and progress of the group, promoting collaboration, verbalization and internalization, and problem-solving with others. As suggested by Luo (2020, p. 5), the time to achieve the set reading goals can be considerably reduced in comparison with individualistic reading activities or the whole-class reading lessons. Nevertheless, collaborative reading activities cannot automatically lead to the desired outcomes. Some factors need to be considered in order to maximize engagement, problem-solving and knowledge application within the group.

In narrative comprehension tasks and oral reading with picture books in primary school, collaborative reading and communication are more effective than independent and individual

reading. When younger students jointly process pictures and textual material, their ability to integrate information and to sequence can develop effectively. Thus, they can reason about the text flexibly and are more likely to make inferences, a critical higher-order cognitive skill for more advanced reading. Paris and Paris (2003, p. 40) argued that activities such as describing picture sequences and identifying the main characters and problems would help students express their thoughts and develop higher-level cognitive activities in collaborative settings. However, the influence of different cognitive abilities in the group to the individual development also needs to be considered, as such heterogeneity could enhance the impact on some learners but hinder it on others. Therefore, educators should be conscious of the developmental stages of individuals to adjust tasks when needed.

There are increasing trends on collaborative reading activities as a way to improve reading motivation, participation, and engagement within groups. Muegues Rodríguez and Colina Chacín (2023, p. 1) carried out research with elementary students in multigrade and in multilingual classrooms and concluded that the utilization of creative and interactive collaborative reading activities could create a positive and inclusive atmosphere within the reading groups. Collaborative activities can reduce the sense of isolation or failure for struggling readers through joint effort. By utilizing the members' strengths, peers are able to positively model reading practices as well as offer help to each other with reading skills and comprehension strategies. Even if collaborative activities have demonstrated benefits, certain limitations have to be kept in mind. If responsibilities are not equitably distributed among members in groups, students with higher confidence in their reading abilities may dominate the group dynamics.

Collaborative activities can be particularly beneficial for students who begin school with poorer reading and/or verbal skills. Group-based intervention approaches can provide students with timely supports and promote the preventive action to address some common literacy problems experienced at the beginning of primary school. As Bents (2003, p. 11) indicated, reading abilities in primary school could be an indicator for later academic achievement. Therefore, it becomes important to address the literacy gaps as early as possible. Interventions, such as reading in pairs, in which stronger students can directly model and assist their less confident partners, are effective to promote significant learning gains for struggling readers. However, for such approach to work, it is essential to carefully group the children to best accommodate the level of each reader and provide with additional support and help for pairs when needed. Otherwise, this type of intervention can fail to ensure the positive development of reading abilities in children who are experiencing the initial literacy difficulties.

Group characteristics can influence the success of collaborative reading activities by creating dynamics which determine the opportunities to make contributions. Luo (2020, p. 7) suggested that teachers need to be skillful with collaborative reading activities and group activities to avoid poor performance and provide assistance. Individual differences such as reading experiences and backgrounds, different temperaments, cognitive styles and levels of prior knowledge, can result in different benefits for each individual. In addition to the importance of individual characteristics in group activities, the task nature of activities plays a critical role in ensuring successful collaborative work among students. Effective tasks should be developed with the aim of supporting students to communicate and interact collaboratively with texts. For successful collaboration, the activities need to be aligned with student developmental stages and reading levels, in terms of cognitive and linguistic demands. Hence, it is important to adapt instructional materials and activities to ensure the opportunity for optimal participation from each individual reader within the groups. Furthermore, it is essential for teachers to reflect on the processes of collaboration to enhance reading competence.

In conclusion, collaborative reading activities provide cognitive, social, and motivational advantages for all readers. It not only creates positive and inclusive learning atmosphere but also supports reading progress of students in diverse and complex needs.

## **4. Motivation and Reading Strategies**

Understanding what motivates young learners to engage with reading is important in order to develop adequate literacy strategies. By referring to internal as well as external sources of motivation and strategic reading methods, the following discussion will look at how motivation and self-regulation can enhance primary learners' reading competence within a framework of equity-based literacy development.

### **4.1 Fostering Reading Motivation**

Understanding the mechanisms which drive children to want to read and how to foster both their internal and external motivation will set the foundation for generating sustained reading

habits. Therefore, this motivational discussion, situated in the broader context of equitable education, explores motivational approaches from family and school as well as motivational instructional practices.

#### **4.1.1 Intrinsic Motivation**

Intrinsic motivation plays a crucial role in facilitating daily reading habits, which in turn lead to successful development of reading and writing skills for primary school learners. Children who read voluntarily, driven by their own interest, for at least 30 minutes a day score significantly higher in creative writing. This indicates that daily reading is associated with vocabulary enhancement, creative thinking, and the production of quality written texts. Intrinsic reading motivation has other valuable benefits for language instruction. According to Gavriluț (2023, p. 6), it “results in positive attitudes towards reading and helps with the development of a long-term habit”.

Intrinsic motivation fosters not only greater engagement but also has a considerable effect on students’ reading comprehension. A medium-strength correlation between intrinsic reading motivation and reading comprehension has been established for primary school students. In this correlation, 12-13% of the students’ comprehension performance is associated with their motivation (Kuşdemir & Bulut, 2018, pp. 1, 10). This demonstrates the significance of motivation when it comes to reading instruction. By providing opportunities for students to make choices, encouraging autonomy, and selecting interest-based texts, intrinsic motivation is enhanced. These types of motivational activities can provide students who are not able to attain target proficiency scores with the encouragement they need to perform better in school.

In this section, I also discuss the impact of the family on intrinsic motivation. Combined efforts by parents, together with family book sharing routines, can nurture intrinsic reading motivation in young children. In any socio-economic context, parental involvement in children’s reading yields positive benefits. Clark (2007, p. 1) identifies three of these advantages, including better academic achievement, comprehension of the English language, and the expression of their thoughts. These findings provide support for using the family environment as a strategy to motivate children to read. While low-income families have difficulties engaging their children in literacy activities, interventions such as setting a time aside for reading or showing an active interest in books may be effective for improving

the literacy competence of socio-economically disadvantaged learners.

Additionally, the home material and experiential conditions of the students can play a major role in promoting intrinsic reading motivation in primary school students. As Gonzalez (2013, pp. 22, 26) determined through his research, reading ability is significantly related to the availability of books, a print-rich atmosphere, and daily routines. Children with multiple copies of books perform better in reading-related tasks and have a high motivation for self-confidence compared to their peers. These findings support the claims made earlier that reading motivation requires opportunity and encouragement. They also highlight the necessity to provide more children with opportunities to read to maximize their literacy ability, especially those who do not have an ample supply of books in their homes. By taking policy measures to increase opportunities to access literacy, intrinsic reading motivation can be boosted for more students.

Furthermore, creative instructional practices can also boost intrinsic motivation by making reading a more personally relevant and enjoyable experience. According to Gavriluț (2023, pp. 6-7), using innovative methods, such as making a digital storybook and creative collaborative writing projects, can increase students' joy in reading and their confidence to read and write better. These findings have major implications for reading instruction and call for educators to move away from their traditional teaching methods. By engaging students in creative and relevant learning activities, intrinsic reading motivation can be fostered and used to better prepare children for high-level reading and writing activities.

Thus, motivation can be perceived as the impetus for initiating daily reading behaviors that can aid primary school learners in their academic performance and lifelong desire to read. In order to successfully motivate primary school students to read daily, factors such as opportunities, encouragement, instructional practices, and the family environment can be targeted to bring about intrinsic motivation in students.

#### **4.1.2 Extrinsic Motivation**

Extrinsic motivation reflects external influence to engage in reading activities through providing rewards, recognition, feedback, etc. It is suitable to enhance motivation among those students with weak intrinsic interests in reading or haven't developed positive attitudes towards reading. For example, certificates for finishing reading tasks or public stage

performance for creative writings could inspire interest and participation in reading, as Wei (2023, p. 5) mentions. However, extrinsic motivators may lack long-term motivation sustainability as intrinsic motivators could provide.

Different kinds of extrinsic motivators would play varied roles. Positive extrinsic motivators could enhance children's self-concept and participation in early reading tasks. However, negative extrinsic motivators, such as comparison and competition with others, could lead to low reading performance and intrinsic motivation over time. Retelsdorf, Köller, & Möller (2011), as cited by Wei (2023, p. 6), showed that the presence of competitive motivators would impair students' reading outcomes.

Moreover, extrinsic motivators that involve social recognition or feedback, like teachers and peers' praise, could effectively encourage students' engagement and self-concept in a reading initiative called PRP intervention, while increasing their reading pleasure and social acknowledgment (Wei, 2023, p. 5). These positive impacts of extrinsic motivators would be enhanced by combining with intrinsic motivational strategies. However, some scholars claimed that whether students could benefit from these external reinforcements to increase reading levels would remain unanswered. Kuşdemir & Bulut (2018, p. 1) claimed that motivation, no matter intrinsic or extrinsic, would explain about 12-13% variance in reading comprehension for elementary school students. It is imperative for educators to examine whether an extrinsic motivation strategy enhances sustained, meaningful involvement with texts or simply initiates limited action only in reward contexts.

Extrinsic motivators are often adopted as temporary interventions to establish initial reading habits for beginners or those students with low reading enthusiasm. For example, students working as a group could be praised on their accomplishments after completing the project collaboratively. Such collaborative activities can effectively encourage inclusive participation. However, some studies suggest that literacy growth mainly attributes to time spending reading independently, and not to external supports (Gavriliuț, 2023, p. 6). Thus, it is vital to examine whether external motivators support learners' transition from low motivation level to a state where reading is internalized.

Although extrinsic motivators are very simple to start, their roles should always be support rather than replace motivation. It is important for teachers to lead the students to gradually depend less and less on the external motivators and be involved in the reading by themselves. Public performance, stage creative writings, etc. can be regarded as effective strategies to involve learners who lack interests to participate, thus enhance motivation.

Nevertheless, Mašát & Nosková (2023, p. 5) proposed that teachers should lead the students to go one step further to incorporate into art and aesthetic texts so as to transcend mere extrinsic factors.

## **4.2 Teaching Reading Strategies**

Effective reading instruction relies on a diverse set of strategies that empower learners to become confident and autonomous readers. This section explores a range of teaching methods, from metacognitive and comprehension techniques to modern digital tools, highlighting how instructional approaches can be adapted to meet the varied needs of primary school students. Positioned within the broader aim of fostering equitable literacy development, these strategies serve as essential tools for educators to enhance engagement, comprehension, and sustained reading motivation.

### **4.2.1 Metacognitive Strategies**

Metacognitive strategies, focusing on planning, monitoring, and evaluation of understanding, have received increasing attention in the realm of education to improve reading performance in primary school students. Various intervention studies show that the explicit teaching of metacognitive strategies boosts learners' reading performance. According to Alenizi and Alanazi (2016, p. 9), students receiving instruction of metacognitive strategies demonstrated significant improvement on the reading post-test.

The core components of metacognitive strategies in the reading process include goal-setting, monitoring, and reflection. When comprehension fails, these three elements empower learners to rereading strategies, predicting the subsequent actions of characters in a book, and making predictions about the text. In doing so, learners can determine whether they are comprehending a text. As described by Alenizi and Alanazi (2016, p. 9), "... such systematic applications make sure that when learners monitor their understanding, they would notice if any comprehension difficulties occur." For primary school learners, having the ability to identify, understand, and fix comprehension breakdown on their own can greatly support their learning.

Because of its inclusivity, the incorporation of metacognitive strategies during classroom

teaching is recommended, particularly in primary school settings. Alenizi and Alanazi (2016, p. 9) stated that "... interventions that promoted children's metacognitive awareness appeared to improve reading achievement across mainstream and special education." In addition, it is more effective when it has "structured exercises designed to promote metacognitive development, that are adapted for students with various cognitive profiles." This is essential for students with learning disabilities to improve their reading capabilities.

Effective metacognitive strategy instruction requires a high degree of scaffolding by teachers. Teachers are expected to use the think-aloud method, in which they reflect and explain their own thoughts during reading. Through consistent modeling, a deliberate classroom setting that utilizes metacognitive strategies ensures it becomes a habit for students. Alenizi and Alanazi (2016, p. 9) mentioned that teachers' demonstrations of "metacognitive strategies encouraged more students to adopt it and think and act like strategic readers". Besides, it is important to create a reflective environment in classrooms to support students in improving metacognition and metacognitive awareness.

Metacognition has a significant influence on self-regulation. Reflective tasks and the use of metacognitive strategies not only help students to self-regulate their learning process but also to understand the way they learn better. Research from Wang, Haertel, and Walberg (1990, p. 5) showed metacognition as one of the most important variables associated with academic achievement. When students learn how to self-regulate their reading and learning behavior, they are better able to recognize comprehension failure and develop a variety of strategies that can be used to resolve the failure, therefore increasing the level of reading autonomy.

Metacognitive strategy instructions should be a continuous process to foster improvements. When learners express their thoughts before, during, and after learning to internalize strategies, their reading, writing, and learning processes become more intentional and can ultimately bring improvements on the overall academic process. According to Wang, Haertel, and Walberg (1990, p. 5), "students who make a plan for how to solve a problem, verbalize their solutions along the way, and think about how to evaluate the end product tend to have higher test scores." Therefore, metacognitive training in reading helps learners become more autonomous and intentional in other aspects of learning, rather than being limited only to the learning of reading.

Reflective behaviors allow students from various socioeconomic levels and cognitive abilities to monitor their behaviors. By integrating reflective practices in classrooms, students are

more aware of their behaviors in the reading and learning process, therefore contributing to more equitable outcomes in school. According to Wang, Haertel, and Walberg (1990, p. 5), "reflective practice enables more equal outcomes because it encourages more equal access to opportunities for growth".

Iterative processes are critical to the success of metacognitive strategy instructions. Students learn by doing through frequent activities in different reading contexts. According to the literature, learning is an iterative process, as students gain a more conscious understanding by practicing it more often. Over the years, educational assessment, and consequently the instruction, have evolved from the measurement of knowledge to an iterative cycle of formative evaluation, action, and revision.

The use of technology also plays an essential role in applying metacognitive strategy instructions. Learning applications and tools facilitate metacognitive strategies, promote students' metacognitive awareness and self-regulated learning, and increase active engagement. According to research from Gavriluț (2023, p. 7), iPad usage in the classroom improves students' attitudes towards reading because, aside from the instruction in a creative writing process, children were also planning, monitoring, and reflecting on their reading and writing. In addition, collaborative digital storytelling improves students' metacognitive skills. "In digital storytelling, the thinking becomes tangible, enabling the children to learn how to reflect and question their own thinking, as well as the thinking of others. This way, students are able to participate in the co-creation of the content." (Gavriluț, 2023, p. 7)

The integration of technology in classrooms offers the availability of tools that enhance opportunities for personalization and collaboration, two central elements in metacognitive strategy instruction. Metacognitive strategy intervention studies utilize tools that support peer feedback, strategy selection, and reflections of learning, increasing students' understanding of and comfort with using various metacognitive strategies. According to Gavriluț (2023, p. 7), "this makes the computer particularly useful for young and low-skilled learners who require careful support and encouragement." While the use of technology has many benefits in education, it is important to note that its effective implementation requires certain competencies. "However, the introduction of technology will succeed only if the teachers know what they want to achieve by using it and understand how technology can help their students". (Gavriluț, 2023, p. 7)

An environment with more opportunities for feedback, such as interactive reading instruction

through technological tools and feedback systems, promotes more critical evaluation of text. Students showed that after interacting with digital text with continuous feedback and assessment, they not only enjoyed but also could critically analyze and question information. "Therefore, students need immediate and individualized feedback from instructors, and constant questioning and self-monitoring, in order to achieve self-control of their reading performance. This means the application of metacognitive awareness strategies" (Guzmán Murillo, Leal Acosta, & Martínez Medrano, 2024, p. 4).

Feedback helps monitor learning progress and evaluate the effects of interventions, and, as a result, it fosters improved comprehension and critical thinking. Students need to be provided with continuous learning experiences in order to achieve a higher level of comprehension and self-regulation. Technology promotes more efficient and accessible feedback loops, which facilitate the monitoring of progress, especially for young readers who require additional guidance and direction. "Students develop a higher-level critical thinking capability by developing the control skills of their learning activities (i.e., application of metacognitive awareness)." (Guzmán Murillo, Leal Acosta, & Martínez Medrano, 2024, p. 4)

Motivating students' literacy instruction using metacognitive awareness strategies creates a feeling of control and enjoyment, consequently promoting greater autonomy and self-regulated learning behavior. In the case study of the incorporation of metacognitive strategies into the instructional approach, research indicates that students increased their enjoyment of reading, were more aware and had better self-regulation in learning to read, and understood how to make judgments about texts. (Wei, 2023, p. 5)

Providing students with recognition of their progress in using self-regulation behaviors encourages students' willingness to engage in the reading learning process and is highly motivating to their performance. When a metacognitive approach is incorporated in a classroom, teachers should focus on the social aspect of metacognition by enabling and enhancing peer sharing and public recognition of learning activities. As described by Wei (2023, p. 5), "By providing positive feedback and praise, the teacher can create a positive self-concept as a reader and promote intrinsic motivation in students." Therefore, teachers should provide reinforcement for the actions being conducted. In doing so, they help students realize their capabilities.

## 4.2.2 Comprehension Strategies

Comprehension strategies foster reading competence in primary school learners to the degree that these enable the making and constructing of meaning rather than merely decoding text. Explicit instruction in text structure comprehension enables pupils to construct meaning through identifying the setting, problem, and solution in narrative text as well as main idea and organizational patterns in expository text. Williams (2005, p. 9) found that the group receiving instruction in text structure comprehension performed significantly higher in post-tests than the group receiving content instruction and the control group, which were both similar in performance. These results provide strong evidence for the value of explicit instruction that enables students to make predictions, monitor meaning construction, and reconstruct textual meaning. The explicit teaching of text structure comprehension calls for careful implementation to ensure its effectiveness and to avoid potentially negative impacts from excessive rigor and flexibility.

One of the most important benefits of explicit instruction in comprehension strategies stems from its ability to bridge the gap between word-level decoding and higher-order comprehension. Training on comprehension strategies that assist in the identification of causality, as well as sequencing and text structure, enables students to make inferential and literal connections between sentences and paragraphs of a text. These skills are central to success at the advanced stages of reading and literacy. Williams (2005, pp. 4-5) suggests that a framework of text structure enables students to more easily master the demands of school-based reading; inclusive classes with pupils varying widely in literacy skills and second language learners can benefit greatly. Even though they help students navigate informational text, the instructional frameworks that teach comprehension strategies, while useful for guiding reading and comprehending complex text, must not serve to replace open-ended and critical thinking (Williams, 2005, pp. 4-5). While framework-driven activities and lessons can be helpful, additional investigation may be useful in determining how structured frameworks can be integrated to ensure optimal outcomes in classrooms with diverse learners.

Introducing comprehension strategies can be done with innovative approaches that are also creative and use technologies such as creative writing and digital storytelling. Through creative writing, pupils are able to develop their narrative competence as well as wider literacy skills. These literacy skills, such as vocabulary development, flexible thinking, and improved organization of ideas, relate positively to comprehension competence (Gavriliuț, 2023, pp. 5-6). By comparison, digital storytelling enhances student engagement and

positive attitude toward reading and writing (Gavriliuț, 2023, p. 7). Both creative writing and digital storytelling are potentially powerful and effective approaches for improving comprehension strategies in the contemporary classroom. Implementation of these methods is worthy of discussion, for empirical evidence shows that these approaches may be challenged due to student and teacher familiarity with technology and accessibility of computers.

Motivation is an influential determinant of the effectiveness of comprehension strategies, for a medium-strength relationship has been found between motivation and reading comprehension performance for elementary school pupils. Kuşdemir and Bulut (2018, pp. 1, 10) found that motivational factors were a significant predictor for reading comprehension achievement; motivational factors for this study, interest in reading and reading frequency, accounted for 12-13% of the variation in reading comprehension performance. This suggests that the value of comprehension strategies is strongly related to the value of intrinsic interest in reading. This implication encourages instructors to select motivational strategies during lessons, which match pupils' interests and preferences, as well as to integrate activities in lessons that are social, fun, and allow active involvement by pupils. It is noteworthy that past research focuses primarily on cognitive or motivational aspects individually. In the future, it will be of great value to examine motivational and cognitive strategies in tandem to better assess the efficacy of different strategies.

Apart from the instruction, other external and internal factors could facilitate the success of comprehension strategy instruction. These internal factors include executive functions such as working memory and self-monitoring, which are integral for summarization and predicting (Zhou, 2024, p. 2). These external factors include having access to home library and growing up in supportive families, which foster high literacy, especially in comprehension (Zhou, 2024, p. 2). Consequently, strategy use is not limited to comprehension instruction itself but is extended by additional factors such as those presented by this source. Research conducted in this area calls for further development. Current literature assumes that the instruction will have the same outcome for all students in the class regardless of cognitive and home backgrounds. It remains difficult to tell how such variations could be addressed when comprehension strategies are implemented during instruction.

In sum, comprehensive comprehension strategy instruction requires a combination of explicit instruction with motivating and creative activities that are complemented by home and individual factors in the learning environments. Williams (2005, p. 9) and Gavriliuț (2023, pp. 5-7) provided evidence for explicit instruction in comprehension strategies and innovative

means, which included creative writing and digital storytelling. However, the significance of motivation also requires the application of strategies that would sustain student interests. This includes the provision of relevant texts as well as collaborative activities (Kuşdemir & Bulut, 2018, pp. 1, 10), along with other factors (Zhou, 2024, p. 2). Taken together, these suggestions support a holistic and flexible instruction for helping primary school students be effective self-regulated readers across a broad range of texts and contexts.

## **5. Support Systems and Resources**

Support systems and resources can help support equitable literacy development by supporting family and school involvement. The following sections will illustrate home, community, and school-based support to create a complete system of support for literacy development.

### **5.1 Family Involvement**

Family involvement plays a critical role in shaping early literacy experiences and supporting the continuation of reading motivation at home. The upcoming sections will explore parental support strategies, home literacy environments, and community engagement in equitable literacy development, emphasizing family and school collaboration within inclusive primary education.

#### **5.1.1 Home Reading Environment**

The home reading environment directly influences children's development of reading skills. Empirical studies show a strong correlation between reading achievement and the diversity of available reading resources at home. Students who are exposed to encyclopedias, newspapers, magazines, and at least 25 books are likely to be more proficient in reading than their peers who do not have access to these resources (Gonzalez, 2013, p. 22). Book collections need to be both diverse and accessible in the home to increase regular book engagement. As mentioned earlier, merely having a rich book selection at home is not enough to improve children's reading skills. Providing book-rich home libraries may address

only the amount of books that children have available, but does this strategy effectively address the accessibility to reading at home or the encouragement children need to fully engage in reading?

Children who frequently read at home tend to have advanced phonemic awareness and vocabulary skills. If children are regularly reading at home at a young age, it improves their chances of understanding how language works and their creative ability to interact with texts (Eke, 2011, p. 3). Although handling books is essential, the extent to which children understand these book handling activities remains an issue that might be more meaningful if families were given more support and strategies.

Regular engagement in a family reading time where children are modeled to enjoy reading and how reading is used in real life can lead to intrinsically motivated readers (Eke, 2011, p. 3; Gonzalez, 2013, p. 22). Since children are modeled to love and enjoy reading, this allows them to develop a positive attitude towards reading and build on their own self-concept. Disparities between parents and other factors, however, often prevent parents from reading daily with their children. Programs that target improving children's intrinsic motivation might better prepare families with methods and strategies to increase daily reading activities.

Families who engage in qualitative reading activities, such as incorporating humor into reading experiences, inviting children to question books, and emphasizing understanding of what is being read, tend to promote fluent and confident readers (Eke, 2011, p. 4). Improving these aspects of children's literacy development is important for positive developmental gains for young children. As with other types of support families may benefit from, specific training might provide parents and children with valuable methods to make the reading experience more interactive, meaningful, and positive.

According to a longitudinal study, the home literacy environment has a higher predictive value for later literacy skills than preschool code-related activities such as letter and phoneme instruction (Pfof, Artelt, and Weinert, 2013, p. 4). As such, there is an urgent need to develop long-term resource-oriented strategies to influence the home literacy environment.

Socioeconomic status can influence children's literacy development in terms of their access to literacy materials and resources at home. Children in families earning above \$50,000 a year tend to have more books at home when compared to children in families earning less than \$25,000 a year (Gonzalez, 2013, p. 75). These inequalities often create disparities in

reading achievement because children from low-income families have more limited access to literacy materials and may begin their schooling less prepared than their peers. It is crucial to address material and economic inequalities, as these frequently affect families' abilities to develop resources at home to support their children's literacy development. Similarly, these inequalities may also contribute to the types of enrichment activities that lower-income families have access to, as low-income families may struggle to afford additional educational apps or extra learning activities for their children. In order to close the literacy gap, it may be necessary to alleviate material disparities as well as the underlying inequities in material production.

Parental education has a significant influence on children's development of early literacy skills. For example, 77% of mothers who have a college degree read to their children daily, while only 49% of mothers with a high school diploma do the same (Gonzalez, 2013, p. 26). Parental educational level influences attitudes towards literacy and the level of available literacy resources, which in turn affects children's development of pre-reading skills. There is an urgent need to equip families with appropriate knowledge and literacy resources to further support their children's development. Community initiatives, such as adult reading programs or family literacy support groups, may be implemented to bridge this achievement gap and further assist parents in reading to their children.

Household structure and resources have an influence on the availability of home literacy routines. For instance, 61% of children in two-parent homes are read to daily, while only 46% of children from single-parent homes are read to daily (Gonzalez, 2013, p. 24). Although all households may be concerned about their children's success in school and may want to engage in home reading practices, not all are able to successfully integrate literacy-rich activities. By the very nature of the structure of these single-parent homes, there are limitations on parental availability to their children. In order for these homes to benefit in similar ways from daily literacy activities, changes to the home and structural contexts in addition to intervention measures should be considered.

Research suggests that children who have their books read to them as an opportunity to engage in play have advanced reading motivation, word knowledge, and sentence organization abilities. If children have reading material read to them at home for enjoyment purposes, they develop better comprehension, creative abilities, motivation, and fluency (Eke, 2011, p. 4). Families who ask their children questions and ask their opinions on the book that they read together are more likely to have children who can follow sentences, spell out words, and ask for meaning (Eke, 2011, p. 4). Cultural differences in families' home

reading habits need to be taken into consideration as reading programs attempt to support parents in how to encourage their children. In some cultures, reading is a ritual that is meant for real and practical purpose; it is not regarded as an enjoyable activity, and instead storytelling is used as a method to engage children in narrative (Eke, 2011, p. 4).

As was discussed earlier, disparities in familial resources lead to differences in pre-reading skill development and reading achievement upon entering school. In particular, reading comprehension tends to be lower among children from households where less print exists (Rowe, Ozuru, and McNamara, 2006, p. 3). Reading comprehension also tends to vary with the complexity and diversity of texts that are provided to children, therefore school-based interventions might need to be individualized so that instruction and resource availability better support families in various settings (Pfof, Artelt, and Weinert, 2013, p. 4).

The cumulative effect of parental education and income can shape the resources and activities provided at home. Therefore, interventions must address literacy development that is tailored to these diverse contexts. Enhancing the home literacy environment is key to ensuring children are prepared when they enter school and beyond. Rather than focusing solely on how frequently home literacy activities are implemented, there is evidence to suggest that how families engage in reading practices in the home might be as critical, or perhaps even more important. In Gavriluț's 2023 observational study, for instance, humor was observed to contribute to children's reading fluency. The same study reported an increased level of interactive engagement that had a greater influence on children's reading levels, while there appeared to be only limited evidence that more sustained reading alone improved reading levels. There is evidence that quality reading practices in a home environment have a bigger impact on future reading level than the duration or length of reading (Gavriluț, 2023, p. 6). Children in these contexts are likely to experience language development at a deeper, more sophisticated level (Eke, 2011, p. 4), as it becomes more fully integrated into their reading engagement.

Parental involvement in daily reading and active listening directly relates to improved reading achievement and enjoyment, less grade repetitions, and increased overall school enjoyment. Disparities in parental access to resources and available time and materials have contributed to the disparities in household support for children's reading abilities (Eke, 2011, p. 2; Gonzalez, 2013, p. 30). Even though most teachers recommend that children should engage in daily reading at home, they only make reading materials available to half the students (Gonzalez, 2013, p. 30). Schools might consider implementing a school lending library system where children can bring books home every day, or schools might partner with

community resources to ensure that families in need have enough support.

The evaluation of the effectiveness of literacy interventions to improve students' literacy skills also has a close connection with school assessments. Many factors affect how well students perform in standardized assessment measures; however, researchers need to continue to address how the complexity of reading texts at home is connected to what students have learned in school. The importance of addressing various socioeconomic and familial aspects in the reading curriculum needs to be evaluated in reading assessment strategies in school (Pfof, Artelt, and Weinert, 2013, p. 4).

### **5.1.2 Parental Support Strategies**

Parental engagement in reading is a multi-pronged strategy essential for fostering literacy development and academic success in children. Active parental participation, such as reading aloud to children and engaging in discussions on the content of books, has been demonstrated to improve a child's literacy achievement, increase school enjoyment, and reduce the risk of grade repetition (Eke, 2011, p. 2). It must be stressed that the quality, not merely the quantity, of parental involvement is pivotal. It should entail asking meaningful questions about the content, relating the story to real-life situations, and extracting the moral lesson of a story to ensure positive growth.

However, there can be challenges in engaging parents in this process. Some barriers to effective involvement include time constraints, parents' illiteracy and unwillingness to teach children, lack of instructional strategies, and lack of resources and support from schools. It is crucial for programs to address these challenges in a way that fosters strong parent-child reading interactions.

It has been proven that the quality of the interaction during shared reading sessions determines children's attitudes toward reading. By allowing the children to pose questions and incorporating humor during reading, parents can greatly impact a child's perspective on the story and the reading process. Eke (2011, p. 4) suggests that when children enjoy reading with their parents and focus on story meaning, they make the most of this interaction in their own literacy development. Families that view reading as fun and stress the importance of story comprehension demonstrate stronger parent-child reading connections, which can ultimately support reading development (Eke, 2011, p. 4). This strategy promotes

active interaction with texts, where comprehension and enjoyment go beyond simply decoding words. However, this interaction may require explicit instruction for families unsure of how to make shared reading meaningful.

In addition, parents can enhance their children's literacy development by allowing children to handle books, develop their own stories, and by the children seeing adults reading in their home or community. These practices foster children's interest in reading and books, providing a concrete and practical base that promotes future reading (Eke, 2011, p. 3).

Children learn through early experiences and their exposure to books, so frequent and high-quality interactions, particularly during preschool years, can predict their later success in reading and writing skills (Eke, 2011, p. 4). It can be concluded that interactions with parents are influential when they take place in the home, especially during the preschool years, and when the book used is read frequently. However, not every family may be able to provide all of these practices because of the limitations on parental time and resource availability. Schools can play a part in helping to provide these practices through book drives and by setting time aside for this activity.

Moreover, rich language modeling by parents can support their children's language development. Exposure to an extended vocabulary used in everyday language and conversation at the dinner table has a long-term effect, influencing children's vocabulary test scores and their ability to compose stories (Snow, 1993, p. 11). A discussion on what will happen next, how the story made one feel, or personal associations with the story contributes to children's vocabulary, inferential skills, and story comprehension (Snow, 1993, p. 12). It can be inferred that rich language models used in homes enhance children's language and inferential skills, regardless of whether that interaction happens with the parent, sibling, or child. However, parents need to be aware of vocabulary levels and their child's comprehension skills to conduct a quality conversation.

There are different types of parental support behaviors that promote the child's literacy. They include parenting as mentor, as model, as organizer, and as teacher of reading. Mentoring entails giving guidance and scaffolding to reading practices, and the majority of the support falls under mentoring, 58%, followed by parental modeling (Oktaviani and Oktaria, 2021, p. 1). It appears parental modeling is most effective in tandem with mentoring (Oktaviani and Oktaria, 2021, p. 1). Parental support in providing an organized home environment is critical, but is the third highest form of support at only 3% (Oktaviani and Oktaria, 2021, p. 1). Instructional behavior, or explicitly teaching literacy skills, is the lowest percentage of total

support (Oktaviani and Oktaria, 2021, p. 1). The support system will have a greater effect on reading outcomes when both the parent and the child are engaged.

Size of the book collection is a strong predictor of reading ability of children. Print books versus electronic books are irrelevant in predicting the child's reading proficiency (Zhou, 2024, p. 2). Having more reading materials exposes the children to more reading activities, therefore increasing the child's reading competence.

Lastly, parental support should vary among children, due to the uniqueness of reading struggles. The strategy that is used may vary, based on the needs of the learner. Some of the interventions that can be used include repeated reading of a passage, listening to the passage before reading aloud, and paired reading. This is proven to support oral reading fluency development in struggling readers (Eke, 2011, p. 4). In addition, Eke (2011, p. 4) suggests that more support is not necessarily better, especially in the case of learners struggling with reading difficulties. The more effective the parental support is to the learner's specific needs and challenges, the better the support (Eke, 2011, p. 4).

## **5.2 School-Based Support**

Effective school-based support constitutes a cornerstone of equitable literacy development by ensuring instructional, resource, and teacher effectiveness that cater to diverse learner needs. This segment outlines the ways in which teachers employ varying methods of support and resource incorporation to foster inclusive, stimulating, and flexible classroom settings that cultivate lasting reading achievement in primary school children. By embedding our analysis in the larger pursuit of enhancing literacy instruction and support, this section aims to illuminate the key elements necessary for establishing a robust foundation for lifelong literacy success.

### **5.2.1 Teacher Support Methods**

Teacher support methods in reading instruction are crucial to enhance literacy development. Ankrum and Bean (2008, p. 2) emphasize that reading levels in classrooms can vary significantly, ranging from below-grade reading levels to above-grade reading. Differentiation of reading instruction helps to ensure that teachers cater to all students' abilities. Effective

differentiation relies on frequent assessment of students' skills and flexible grouping of learners. Emergent readers may need phonics and decoding skills, and fluent readers may benefit from explicit instruction to improve comprehension. Ankrum and Bean (2008, p. 2) believe that homogeneous and heterogeneous groupings aid students' learning process and overall progress.

Monitoring students' reading ability with techniques such as running records and reading logs enables teachers to provide instruction that meets individual student needs. Ankrum and Bean (2008, p. 8) share that differentiated instruction has been extremely successful with struggling readers in elementary school classrooms, as three out of four students who were originally below-grade level exceeded expectations. Teachers who can diagnose what their students need assistance in are more likely to choose tasks that provide challenge but are attainable for them. This practice also helps to ensure motivation.

Studies by Dörfler, Golke, and Artelt (2009, p. 4) reveal that when the intensive process of scaffolding is used in reading instruction, it has a positive impact on children's strategy use and their comprehension of texts. The main goal of scaffolding in reading instruction is to encourage a student to use strategies independently by gradually reducing teacher support. This allows them to grasp deeper meaning, as they will have a greater understanding of the content. Scaffolding is not only beneficial to reading, but can also be utilized in other subjects to strengthen understanding and retention. Unlike static assessment, dynamic assessment considers how instructional support can aid the learner in acquiring knowledge, and is utilized by researchers for predicting success in reading. Dörfler, Golke, and Artelt (2009, p. 4) show through their research that dynamic assessment has long-term impacts on students' abilities to apply specific reading strategies, as well as reading comprehension. They also suggest that the more frequent scaffolding is used, the more students will improve their reading, indicating a need for consistent utilization of support in instruction. Five months and six months after the interventions that Dörfler, Golke, and Artelt (2009, pp. 4-5) carried out, they were able to determine the long-term effects of both static and dynamic assessments by conducting follow-ups with the participants. The study suggested that students' retention of skills lasted beyond the instructional period.

Gavriluț (2023, p. 6) suggests that creativity and storytelling during language lessons have been known to positively impact students' literacy. By integrating creative writing activities, elementary students are developing originality, flexibility, and organization skills, improving their creativity, and positively impacting their attitudes toward learning. In one experiment, Gavriluț (2023, p. 6) examined the impact of creative writing and digital storytelling using an

iPad on students' motivation for language lessons. According to the study, student motivation was higher when iPads were utilized in small group writing and telling of stories. The study also revealed that student performance during collaborative storytelling activities, with the use of an iPad, had higher effects on motivation than the students' perception of their competence in being creative writers (Gavriliuț, 2023, p. 7). Motivation to read voluntarily is important in developing literacy skills. By integrating these types of activities in language arts, teachers can differentiate their instruction to address gaps that are often seen in students who do not get such engagement at home.

Literary games, storytelling activities, and working cooperatively in groups are all aspects of the process of active engagement in literature lessons, and help to develop creative thinking and collaboration skills. These are not standards taught during reading, so teachers have to be intentional when selecting the types of support they will utilize in their classrooms. Literature instruction can be an enriching experience for young students if it allows them to experience reading as a fun activity through a creative process. This creative process of instruction can be achieved by incorporating interactive and playful literary and theatrical methods. Savina and Mykhailova (2001, p. 1) assert that literary games positively enhance creativity and enable cooperative relationships through communication and the understanding of one another. Storytelling activities stimulate creativity and are a crucial component of instruction for early learners to actively explore the reading material in the classroom, rather than passive learning, through imagination and play. Group activities are useful for developing teamwork and cooperation between learners, which helps to improve comprehension of material during reading, and improve communicative skills, as students are sharing ideas in their groups. These activities may have limited benefit in linguistically diverse classrooms. However, these methods assist in redirecting students' attention back to reading. Savina and Mykhailova (2001, p. 2) describe that "modern-day students have no desire to be distracted in any way from their communication with computers. We tried to counteract these factors and, using certain literary games, have revived the students' enthusiasm to explore the content of literature".

There are certain types of strategies a teacher can utilize to support reading development of struggling readers, such as early assessment of reading level, frequent check-ins for comprehension, and continued assistance in reaching growth goals. It is important that students receive the appropriate assistance from a teacher in elementary school when they are performing below-grade level in reading, which can be made possible through frequent and individualized instruction. Research by Ankrum and Bean (2008, p. 8) found that after utilizing these specific support interventions with students in an elementary school

classroom, the students who were performing below-grade level at the start of the year made exponential improvements after receiving the specialized instruction, which put them in higher reading groups. These strategies can be utilized by teachers to help students reach a desired reading level. The success depends upon the teacher's willingness to go above and beyond, build rapport with each student, and collaborate with the students' family and other teachers. All students deserve an equal opportunity for literacy growth in an educational environment where teachers are able to meet them where they are academically.

### **5.2.2 Resource Integration**

The effective integration of resources within schools and reading facilities enhances reading competence among primary learners. School libraries and community reading centers must have several age-appropriate readers for students to select from and to read often in order to enhance their literacy experience. Research indicates that having access to a good book collection where reading is promoted allows self-directed reading, as well as differential treatment during school activities (Oktaviani & Oktaria, 2021, p. 1). However, for the resources to yield the benefits required to enhance children's reading competency, proper support is required from teachers or parents, to help them select books for reading. Without these adults' assistance, children may select books which are difficult to read. For reading activities in primary school, the effectiveness of the library must be supported by parents and schools. In most rural primary schools, resources are scarce to make this combination effective. Schools should improve on their resources as well as their reading materials for the benefit of learners.

Other extracurricular activities like book fairs or reading competitions can also motivate learners to read and to make them develop interest in reading. Both extracurricular events promote children to strive for an achievement which is socially recognized. When families and schools get together, such extracurricular activities can be effectively implemented and positively influence students' motivation to read (Wei, 2023, p. 5). Students will also enjoy themselves as their involvement and motivation increases; this has been linked to high reading achievement in the context of school and life. Nevertheless, most primary schools do not have adequate resources for extracurricular activities. Additionally, parents may be working during such activities, resulting in low attendance.

Supplementary materials for reading and reading intervention strategies can bridge literacy differences among primary school pupils. Studies done in Sri Lanka show that intervention in providing crucial reading materials, such as books with grade-appropriate content and supplementary materials, were very effective in children's reading progress (Gunwardena, 1999, p. 2). They found that teachers' or researchers' formal assessment for reading purposes and their feedback further enriched reading development in these children. This goes to say that resources and supplementary intervention strategies are very effective for primary students. This intervention has improved reading competencies, particularly during reading comprehension activities. However, the cost of these intervention materials has made it difficult for schools to effectively use these strategies.

Parental involvement in at-home reading support has improved reading performance among primary learners. Studies show that support strategies at school such as guidance and reading materials, among others, have increased parents' engagement during at-home reading activities (Eke, 2011, p. 2). This is because it provides them with the basic guidelines for helping the child read properly, as well as the available resources. The strategies include sending home books for children to read and reading logs to monitor progress. These tools help the parents know what to read, and thus support their children in school-based literacy activities at home. Schools are supposed to develop parental support by making them have more access to their children's reading logs. They can give additional assistance when parents are informed about children's reading behavior at school. Although the interventions improved children's reading performance, these strategies were not followed in all schools. This may be due to ineffective teacher-parent communication systems in the schools and parental literacy levels.

The incorporation of digital platforms alongside print resources enables individualized practice and feedback opportunities. Studies indicate that having both print and digital media in classrooms, supported by comprehensive formative assessment measures, can enhance literacy experiences for primary students (Wei, 2023, p. 5). This requires the availability of technological tools such as e-readers, books in digital platforms, and computer-based activities for reading development in the school setup. With these resources, learners can engage in interactive activities which help with individualized feedback to facilitate reading performance. Thus, primary schools need to make good use of technology as well as print books. Technology can effectively engage learners to develop independence in learning beyond the school classroom hours. Nonetheless, there has been increased screen time among most pupils, hindering them from practicing reading activities for longer periods of time.

In sum, the proper allocation and utilization of resources are critical to address the needs of primary children effectively. Access to diverse reading materials, coupled with motivation-building activities, support in underprivileged communities, enhanced parental involvement, and the adoption of digital platforms, are the strategies discussed for the allocation and management of resources.

## **6. Assessment and Evaluation**

This chapter examines the important processes of assessing and monitoring reading development. It will investigate methods that reflect a student's progress and identify areas of improvement. We will explore formative and summative assessment approaches, as well as documentation to support ongoing evaluation. Situated in a wider context of creating equitable literacy instruction, this chapter will consider how effective evaluation promotes quality and differentiated support for all learners.

### **6.1 Reading Assessment Methods**

Assessment methods play a critical role in evaluating students' reading development using various approaches that support teachers and inform instruction. From formative techniques that provide continuous feedback to summative assessments, this chapter explores diverse methods that inform equitable literacy practices. These strategies are essential for improving literacy education and connecting assessment and instruction for diverse learners.

#### **6.1.1 Formative Assessment**

Formative assessment practices in reading education provide teachers with invaluable insights into their students' real-time reading processes. When combined with techniques such as ongoing teacher observations or oral reading practices, educators can determine particular strengths or areas for growth and immediately tailor instruction to meet the precise needs of each student. Furthermore, reading aloud to either the teacher or a fellow student has been found to drastically improve fluidity and accuracy, as demonstrated by the high

effect size calculated (Stabler, 2019, p. 8). It is for this reason that formative assessment practices provide both instructionally informative and inherently engaging experiences.

When teachers consistently integrate formative assessment into their daily or weekly classroom activities, they can ascertain specific difficulties and barriers that impact reading fluency. It is through these regular monitoring practices that small errors or irregular prosody are noticed, preventing further skill deficits. The inclusion of formative practices in reading lessons is also crucial in order for students to receive immediate and formative feedback and begin to utilize reading strategies more strategically. When learners can engage in metacognitive self-talk during reading practices, it can benefit both comprehension and motivation. Simultaneously, it can serve to inform the teacher about a student's specific challenges, skill acquisition, and goal attainment.

Formative assessments in reading education are enhanced by new and diverse educational tools that assist students in monitoring progress and provide teachers with immediate and useful data. One of the more significant digital additions to the field has been that of audiobook software. Audiobooks can provide a highly personalized experience for students who are particularly attracted to and/or stimulated through their sense of hearing. In research surrounding the use of digital tools in literacy instruction in more rural districts, students expressed they are more motivated to read, both in and out of school, when offered access to online reading programs such as those used on tablet applications (Pérez Theran and López Echaniz, 2022, p. 12). Aside from motivational benefits, these apps assist teachers in differentiating reading tasks across a number of abilities and interests. Additionally, audiobooks allow educators to track student time spent on reading, progress through texts, and frequently missed words and questions. Through the incorporation of digital educational resources, many students are drawn to reading practice that is simultaneously fun and informative, with the support of clear and timely feedback.

Formative assessments are often incorporated into brief enrichment activities, conducted across a defined period to test a specified intervention strategy. For instance, the results collected during short Teaching at the Right Level (TaRL) Arabic and French reading interventions demonstrated statistically significant changes in participants' fluency (Binaoui, Moubtassime, and Belfakir, 2023, p. 4). The incorporation of short-cycle formative assessments during intervention programming can enhance the immediate and formative responsiveness that educators may have, while ensuring a timely reevaluation and redirection. In this case, the effect sizes (Arabic:  $Z=-6.271967$ ,  $p=.000$ ,  $r=.60$ ; French:  $Z=-7.361956$ ,  $p=.000$ ,  $r=.71$ ) provided teachers with strong information and support for

program adjustments. In short-cycle formative assessments, students experiencing difficulty with foundational skills can be readily identified and, through more deliberate instruction and activities, avoid the frustration and helplessness of ongoing educational failure.

Formative assessments that monitor the use of reading strategies and executive function use by individual learners can improve instructional design in both differentiated and response to intervention (RTI) approaches. Assessment practices for executive function and strategy use provide insight into deficits and skill gaps that teachers are often unaware of. For example, through assessment of executive function in reading comprehension, educators can ascertain if comprehension deficits are the result of poor exposure to reading, instruction, and strategies, or the result of inadequate cognitive control and focus (Zhou, 2024, p. 1). Teachers who incorporate an evaluation of strategy use in their formative reading practices can design instruction that meets individual learning needs. When teachers can observe student strategy use, they can provide direct remediation practices for those students in need of targeted instruction and interventions, ultimately improving literacy achievements. One study demonstrates that a teacher's formative evaluation of students' strategy use during reading and learning tasks improves students' motivation and self-concept, leading to higher levels of classroom performance over time and decreasing the probability of educational failure experiences (Zhou, 2024, p. 2).

Formative reading assessment practices are valuable when they provide frequent and individualized instructional feedback. As students use this feedback, it becomes a routine part of their learning process, which is often integrated through activities such as peer evaluations, reading group discussions, and the utilization of metacognitive strategy self-checklists (Pérez Theran and López Echaniz, 2022, p. 11; Stabler, 2019, p. 18). Additionally, motivation can be increased through group-based practices such as partner-read alouds (Stabler, 2019, p. 14) or collaborative goal-setting activities, in which teachers can assess individual growth over short cycles (Pérez Theran and López Echaniz, 2022, p. 13). Through the integration of formative assessment practices, teachers can provide students with feedback that is clear, timely, and goal-directed.

### **6.1.2 Summative Assessment**

The summative assessments measure reading competence at the end of the year in standardized tests and benchmarks that provide an overview of the reading level and permit

comparing different educational systems and schools. However, since all the students are assessed with the same format, they can omit certain reading skills, such as comprehension, fluency, and vocabulary. For instance, in the international reading evaluation promoted by the OECD, the Colombian students obtained an average score of 412 points, far below the OECD average (Pérez Theran and López Echaniz, 2022, p. 5). However, even when the overall scores in the summative assessments show a deficient situation, the information of the summative assessments can be completed with formative methods that take into account the context of the student as well as of the school. In addition, summative assessment may fail to capture the students' incremental gains. When essential skills, such as inferential comprehension, expression in reading, or use of the new words, are not evaluated, there is a risk of presenting an insufficient picture of the student's performance.

Therefore, it is essential that the summative assessments avoid focusing only on general performances. This may harm those students whose reading skills show imbalances. Cultural and language differences might not be detected in summative assessments, thus representing a source of bias that needs to be avoided (Pfof, Artelt, and Weinert, 2013, p. 4). One of the limitations of the summative assessment, which is also observed when examining the national and international comparisons of Colombian students' performance, is that it reveals poor reading performances without examining why, as discussed in the previous point. The gap observed between the students from developed countries and the Colombians might stem from diverse causes (such as economic factors, access to resources, the integration of new technologies in rural areas, and the presence of audiobooks, etc.), so the summative tests will be more efficient when complemented with formative assessments in order to detect the source of the low reading performance and try to promote effective pedagogical strategies.

For instance, in rural areas, the presence of audiobooks has proven to increase students' motivation and engagement with reading (Pérez Theran and López Echaniz, 2022, p. 12). Therefore, the summative assessments need to be integrated with other formative approaches in order to unveil how the new methodologies might interact with motivation and with the gaps to be improved, in order to devise effective actions to bridge them.

Summative assessment should include every dimension of reading and should be designed for specific populations. Some standardized assessment tools may ignore the incremental growth of students or be insufficient for students from certain cultural backgrounds. Summative evaluation should thus include various sources of information and tools, such as the ones that teachers use in the classroom. These tools can be used both for tracking the

students' incremental gains and for collecting information that standard tests cannot measure (Pfost, Artelt, and Weinert, 2013, p. 6).

Longitudinal studies on reading performance that have been conducted in Germany evidence that the growth rates per year significantly reduce when children move from elementary to secondary education (Pfost, Artelt, and Weinert, 2013, p. 3). This fact is also valid for the summative assessments. Summative tools are not very sensitive to assess gains over short periods, especially in the later years of school education, which means that they need to be complemented with progress-monitoring instruments in order to capture the individual progress of the students and allow teachers to make suitable decisions in regard to curriculum and instruction for those students who have differentiated needs.

Longitudinal panels help explore how the students change over time. An ongoing study of more than 1,000 students in Germany is tracking the students' achievement. They report differences related to economic and cultural dimensions, such as family income or non-German-speaking households. On this panel study, when these children reached the fourth grade of the elementary school, 20% of their families (one parent) identified a non-German language as their mother tongue (Weinert et al., 2024, p. 45).

Longitudinal panels show significant data about how reading changes over time, but also the difficulties of these tools for tracking students' progress. When families have a weak influence in the educational environment, summative assessment alone will not improve or maintain the students' reading competence. In the case above, they will need other instruments that allow a greater insight into the students' cultural and language differences and integrate family involvement into the teaching-learning process.

In general, summative tools need more contextualized procedures than other approaches due to their nature. For example, summative assessments, along with a structured reading stimulation program, were used in a study to determine the impact of these two elements on the early language stimulation of preschool children in Yarinacocha in the department of Ucayali, in Peru. After applying the McNemar statistical test, the authors concluded that there was a statistically significant improvement in 61.42%, thus showing a favorable impact (Vasquez Pérez et al., 2022, p. 7). The study involved 140 participants between 4 and 5 years old, distributed among 11 different education institutions. The significance level of 0.05 indicated a level of 95% for the statistical tests (Vasquez Pérez et al., 2022, p. 6).

It is also necessary that summative tests are in accord with the local context of the target

population. Even when the tests may be well designed in theoretical terms, the way they are used might not correspond to the local necessities. In the case of multilingual environments, this concern has to be addressed by making sure that the participants know all the test instructions (Pfof, Artelt, and Weinert, 2013, p. 5). By doing this, students will not fail to meet an objective due to their limited experience with test taking, but to an actual limitation in the measured competence.

Summative tools can be a valuable asset for assessing performance at the end of a year. However, these tools also require caution. In the case of standardized tests, the fact that all students are measured with the same instrument may overlook students' incremental gains, overlook some critical reading skills, and fail to account for students' contextual differences. Therefore, the data of the summative assessments must be interpreted according to the teacher's experience with reading evaluation instruments as well as knowledge of the learner (Pfof, Artelt, and Weinert, 2013, p. 6).

As said previously, the main limitation of summative assessment is that it yields only one overall score for the students' reading performance. This is counterproductive since most often this score is interpreted as a measure of the progress in reading skills over the whole course year. The data may not be representative for all the different dimensions of reading competence. Summative tests need to be contextualized, in many senses. These tools need to consider the local background of the participants to accurately interpret the data (Weinert et al., 2024, p. 45).

In conclusion, when summative assessments are integrated with other diagnostic, formative, and instructional methods and tools, they provide useful and meaningful data. However, if used in isolation, summative assessments often fail to capture the dynamic and complex nature of reading performance, thus providing limited data on the impact of new technologies and other changes that need to be integrated for better education.

## **6.2 Progress Monitoring**

Effective progress monitoring provides continuous assessment of reading, therefore this section is on methods used to evaluate and document reading in primary schools and its role in enhancing literacy outcomes across the spectrum.

### **6.2.1 Performance Indicators**

Performance indicators of reading competence are essential tools to understand how well the complex skills involved in reading are integrated into literacy, that is, decoding, fluency, comprehension and expressive accuracy. Performance assessments that can evaluate this relationship would consider qualitative indicators of speed and accuracy, but also intonation and phrasing, expressive measures associated with a deeper comprehension of a text. In this sense, fluency is the combination of accuracy, rate and expression, which conveys meaning to the audience (Foorman et al., 2016, p. 6), so for teachers, performance assessments help in the identification of a learner's strengths and needs so that they can develop appropriate instruction. A challenging task remains to evaluate some of these indicators, such as expressive accuracy, which involves more subjective assessments. The variability of the data collected may be controlled through rubrics and teacher training.

Performance indicators may vary widely depending on socioeconomic and home language experience. Several studies conclude that a larger vocabulary size is a relevant factor in reading competence that is highly dependent on socioeconomic levels. For instance, in a longitudinal study carried out in several countries, including the USA, Brazil, the Netherlands and Ireland, the initial vocabulary of students from high SES homes was twice the size of that of students from low SES homes (Tomevska-Ilievska, 2020, p. 11). That is, as children enter school with different home literacy experiences, this will significantly affect their skills in the key areas that make up reading competence: decoding, comprehension and fluency. This indicates that the language and vocabulary in an early years context, such as at home, where students spend most of their day, influence not only the size of children's vocabularies, which may have double as many words than that of children of low SES levels, but also impact their reading skills, such as the awareness of the sounds that make up words or how spoken language breaks down into syllables and words, both important for decoding (Foorman et al., 2016, p. 4). For this reason, family background should be taken into consideration when developing performance indicators that measure reading competence, as they represent a critical factor influencing a child's potential to learn to read.

Assessing motivation adds an important variable when monitoring reading performance, because research shows that motivation predicts 13% of the variance in reading comprehension performance (Kuşdemir and Bulut, 2018, p. 1). Assessing motivation is crucial because students with technical skills, such as decoding and fluency, often

demonstrate low comprehension because of low intrinsic motivation. Also, motivational assessments may indicate differences in performance between subgroups; for instance, female students show higher comprehension scores than male students, and students with preschool experience score higher on comprehension tests involving informative texts (Kuşdemir and Bulut, 2018, pp. 6-7). To foster motivation, teachers can engage children in discussions around books and ask open-ended questions to encourage them to interpret what the author is saying and respond to texts critically and imaginatively (Foorman et al., 2016, p. 3).

Teacher-mediated activities involving ICT tools, such as audiobooks and apps for dialogic reading, lead to gains in meaningful learning for several reasons. Students are more likely to attend to tasks, have positive attitudes and participate in activities, thus developing engagement in reading-related practices (Pérez Theran and López Echaniz, 2022, pp. 11-14). Also, ICT tools lead to increased motivation, expressive reading, oral participation, and comprehension in rural students. ICT tools have the possibility of emulating real-time activities, and one of the interactive and authentic activities most widely used in early literacy is dialogic reading, which prompts high-level thinking skills by having children reflect on the content and messages being conveyed in books to solve problems and interpret information (Foorman et al., 2016, p. 3). ICT tools should not be the only tools used to foster early literacy development, but they represent powerful tools for fostering meaningful engagement with books and literacy. It has been seen that ICT tools and audiobooks may have positive impacts on children's fascination and motivation to learn to read. While ICT tools could emulate activities such as dialogic reading, several limitations may be present, such as the limited access to technological devices and the lack of adequate training for teachers to use these technologies successfully in early years.

The annual increase in reading achievement has been reported to decline over the elementary years, where the higher gains are observed in the first years of primary education, and this tendency weakens in the subsequent years (Pfof, Artelt, and Weinert, 2013, p. 3). Progress monitoring measures of reading performance need to capture this tendency and represent gains in all aspects of early literacy, because failure to identify developmental progress may lead to poor practices such as lowering levels of challenge. Measures such as pre- and post-intervention that measure incremental gains in key areas of reading performance, such as decoding, fluency, motivation and comprehension, are extremely important for recognizing and fostering children's potential in learning to read. Such measures can also be complemented by assessment of expressive accuracy and expressive accuracy rates as indicators of deeper comprehension of texts (Foorman et al.,

2016, pp. 5-6). Progress-monitoring benchmarks of early literacy should be adjusted to reflect adequate developmental growth within each stage of elementary education to prompt the continual growth of reading performance in all areas (decoding, fluency, motivation and comprehension), since each component of reading competence influences another one. This fact reflects that monitoring progress during early primary education is paramount to fostering the rapid and constant gains observed during that developmental period. A systemic approach to monitoring progress is recommended for this reason, including several formative measures to obtain a comprehensive diagnostic analysis of incremental progress.

Performance indicators of reading competence are useful tools to understand how the several components of early literacy interact with one another to foster children's competence in reading and in the literacy practices of their cultures. Effective implementation relies on capturing multiple levels and components of reading competence in ways that are accurate and can provide detailed feedback on what steps can be taken to foster all facets of early literacy development. As a diagnostic tool for literacy competence, indicators may prove important in the success of early literacy programs.

### **6.2.2 Documentation Methods**

The documentation strategy covers methods of recording and monitoring of a student's development and progress in reading proficiency with the use of advanced tools and strategies. Individualized digital portfolios and progress trackers for tracking a student's reading behaviors not only entail their academic progress but extend to a holistic documentation, taking into consideration external support from families and use of technological resources to help monitor the development of reading behavior. Zhou (2024, p. 2) agrees that there is a positive and predictive relationship between the number of books in homes and students' reading progress, as documentation strategy must focus on the number of book materials, whether print or digital, as there have been no significant differences in print and digital books. The method enables teachers to record and monitor students' learning progress through not only reading activities in the classroom but also home environment. The obstacle to this kind of documentation is to relate the reading behavior to what goes on at home as there can be problems in generalizing data and interpreting meaning regarding various contexts of children across all socio-economic factors.

Use of technological tools in documentation strategy enables the recording of individual and detailed student data as a support for effective instruction. The approach promotes the documentation of comprehensive records of not only reading behavior but motivation and reading environment to use them as resources for interventions. In support to this, Pérez Theran and López Echaniz (2022, pp. 12, 14) found that use of ICT-integrated strategy and audiobooks triggers motivation and supports meaningful learning gains in rural areas. This finding reveals the power of using advanced technologies to address the shortage of resources. Nevertheless, the reality is that many school organizations and educators in rural communities and communities of color encounter difficulty in accessing technological materials for teaching purposes due to lack of resources and infrastructure. Therefore, it is critical for policymakers to invest resources and training to ensure the accessibility of technological tools in teaching and learning to enhance effective implementation of digital portfolios and progress tracker.

Another use of innovative documentation techniques includes ICT-based reading log and audiobook. Pérez Theran and López Echaniz (2022, pp. 12, 14) shared that use of such techniques in their teaching strategy in a rural area had evoked students' fascination and love for reading, increasing students' reading achievements. Furthermore, incorporating multiple methods of communication in documentation promotes the recording of qualitative data in diverse forms, such as observation notes and questionnaires, to determine the student's preferences, engagement, and motivation. These innovative documentation methods provide schools and teachers with critical information to identify more effective ways of delivering lessons in diverse contexts.

The challenge in using technological innovations is the possible unequal access to technology. This leads to inequities between students who have no or less exposure with technological tools, and students who have wide and diverse access with these types of tools. To prevent marginalizing students with low or no access to technology, it is imperative to incorporate diverse ways of communication, such as analog, into the recording of development in reading behavior and other aspects of the learner in different settings.

The use of annotated logs in the flipped classroom, digital observation chart, and self- or peer-evaluation form enable teachers to document students' learning motivation and performance, which Qiang (2018, p. 5) identified as having significantly higher effects on learning in the flipped classroom compared to traditional instruction. When teachers document the engagement level and participation of group members in this setting, they can see which techniques benefit students as a whole and how they impact student

achievements. However, it is also important to consider that observations and interpretations in the annotation and logs must be consistent to have valid and reliable evaluation data. As schools begin to include more collaborative projects and activities, such documentation becomes more valuable and important for determining future implementation of teaching strategies to help learners reach proficiency with skills development, academic concepts, and application.

The recording and documenting of family involvement activities, which includes family member(s) assisting and supporting the students at home, helps enhance the documentation strategy in various ways. Clark and Picton (2012, p. 6) share findings of their research that indicated that maternal support and parental reading behavior positively correlated with higher reading standards among students. Including such elements can help enhance the effectiveness and validity of documentation strategies and processes, as educators gain an understanding of how family support and engagement impacts students' academic performance and development. The challenge in recording and analyzing family involvement is generalizing for all students across diverse contexts and socio-economic factors and implementing inclusive processes of collecting information about what goes on at home. Parents also play a great role in enhancing the effectiveness of documentation strategies, as they provide the teacher and the school important information about the learner's behavior, performance, and academic support at home. This, in turn, improves the effectiveness and reliability of evaluation procedures and processes.

Regular updates on family involvement activities can help educators and school personnel monitor the progress of each student, identify potential influences, and prevent negative effects on the students' learning behavior and performance. Keeping a log of changes in family circumstances can also help in the immediate provision of support and intervention in the student's learning journey. The involvement of Clark and Picton (2012, p. 6), as it may impact a student's education journey at any time. However, it is critical to carefully assess the type of metric used to determine and measure the involvement of families to avoid bias and discrimination. Incorporating variables of qualitative nature, such as observations of parents, how they respond to their children while reading aloud, what conversations are done, and how well the children respond to the stories, can increase the effectiveness and reliability of the tool for assessment of family support in promoting students' reading growth.

Another strategy of effectively documenting student's reading journey is the documentation of teacher development and instructional changes in education. The impact of the competence of the teacher as a result of development and training affects students' success.

Zhou (2024, p. 2) agrees that professional and well-trained teachers benefit students more, therefore, it is a critical part of the documentation process for the teachers to track and record the skills development, training attended, instructional techniques implemented, and interventions used for teaching students to read. Providing such documentation to educators and school systems not only enables the evaluation and effectiveness of the strategies and techniques employed to address certain student groups and cases but also assists the teachers in adjusting their instructions to better address the needs of the students. As teacher competence and methods are recorded and reflected, it is necessary to design appropriate metrics and instruments to assess and document the changes and progress of the instruction as well. Clear directions and guidance help provide the teachers consistency and accurate measurement of growth in their teaching skills.

Records of teacher-related changes, implemented strategies, activities, and assessment of student performance helps teachers reflect and improve in their craft of teaching. Keeping record of student and intervention activities and outcomes in diverse ways helps educators adjust and improve teaching strategies to align with their goals and meet the needs of the students more effectively. Having student data, and its comparison to diverse instructional activities, strategies, and methodologies, teachers, administrators, school leaders, and policymakers gain insights and institutional knowledge that are very useful in future planning, preparation, and execution. In this, students get assistance with individualized intervention. Zhou (2024, p. 2) mentions that personalized instruction should be emphasized in addressing the needs of all learners, and therefore, must be taken into account as a part of the documentation processes, regardless of race or socio-economic factors.

To conclude, effective documentation strategies cover a combination of several factors to capture the nature of students' development of reading behaviors, skill application, academic proficiency, environment in the home, family assistance, exposure to reading materials and practices, and overall motivation. Implementation of these strategies has challenges of diverse students of different settings, socio-economic class, unequal accessibility to advanced technological resources, and lack of financial support to teacher-training opportunities. The success and effectiveness of documentation in promoting and assisting the advancement of students' growth in reading relies not only on a compilation of factors for the data but also on the careful planning and implementation to support the teachers' understanding and appreciation of their role, use diverse and effective techniques, and overcome obstacles in collecting and monitoring student information.

## 7. Conclusion

The focal point of this scholarly endeavor involved an exploration into the diverse elements influencing reading proficiency among elementary school pupils, with a particular emphasis being placed on the efficacy of pedagogical methodologies, individual student attributes, motivational aspects, and the interplay between familial and school-based support structures. The central research question that guided this investigation was focused on the identification of the most efficacious strategies for the facilitation of sustained progress in reading and equitable outcomes in literacy, in addition to the elucidation of the circumstances under which such strategies produce the most pronounced effects. This aim has been fulfilled through a thorough synthesis and critical appraisal of empirical findings, which includes both conventional and contemporary instructional techniques, assessment tools, and support systems. It was determined through analysis that a multifaceted, evidence-based strategy is vital for the encouragement of reading ability, one that incorporates individualized teaching, motivation and strategy training, regular and early evaluation, and the active involvement of families and communities.

Important understandings of the fundamental elements of reading proficiency have been presented throughout the main body of this research. It can be seen through the results that phonological awareness, vocabulary expansion, reading speed, and understanding are interdependent components that need to be addressed comprehensively inside primary education. From a well-balanced combination of organized, skills-based instruction—such as phonics—and real text experiences that are typical of whole language techniques, effective teaching strategies come to light. The investigation also supports the idea that incorporating collaborative learning, interactive reading techniques, and digital tools improves both involvement and skill development. Most importantly, differentiated and motivation-based education is shown to be crucial since students have varied linguistic backgrounds, levels of school readiness, and cognitive profiles. The significance of formative and summative evaluation methods is highlighted by the study, with continuous progress monitoring allowing teachers to spot specific needs and modify teaching strategies accordingly. The frequency, comprehension, and creative writing of reading are all significantly impacted by the interaction of intrinsic and extrinsic motivation, with intrinsic motivation standing out as being particularly important for long-term literacy involvement. The quality of the home literacy environment, family participation, and fair access to resources are all shown to be significant factors, with inequalities in socioeconomic position and parental education strongly related to

reading results.

It is evident that the results, when considered in the wider context of research, are in line with and build upon the body of theoretical and empirical knowledge now available on the development of literacy. The conclusions reached lend credence to and improve upon earlier research on the efficacy of early intervention, interactive and customized instruction, and the crucial roles played by teacher competence and formative feedback. This study advances the topic by illustrating the synergistic benefits of combining traditional teaching approaches with cutting-edge methods, such as digital storytelling and group projects, by bringing together various lines of research. Furthermore, the study emphasizes the reciprocal reinforcement that exists between initiatives carried out in schools and literary settings in the home, highlighting the fact that consistent advancement in reading ability is more likely to occur when families and teachers collaborate as partners in the educational process. The study thus offers a comprehensive viewpoint on how the integration of cognitive, motivational, pedagogical, and environmental variables can be arranged to promote reading success in classrooms that are both diverse and heterogeneous.

A vital assessment of the research approach and findings brings to light particular shortcomings inherent in the study's methodology and breadth. The research is based mostly on a secondary assessment of empirical studies, which may differ in terms of methodological rigor, relevance to context, and generalizability to a variety of educational settings. The use of data from the literature, while enabling a comprehensive synthesis, restricts the capacity to capture all contextual subtleties, particularly those pertaining to shifting digital trends or particular local obstacles in literacy instruction. Furthermore, while considering how well the produced recommendations may be applied to educational systems with different resource levels, cultural norms, and policy frameworks, caution is advised. The study nonetheless offers a strong and thorough foundation upon which future empirical investigations and practical initiatives may be developed, in spite of these limitations.

Looking forward, the research highlights a number of encouraging avenues for further study and practical advancement. There is an urgent need for longitudinal studies that look at how well blended didactic techniques last over time, particularly as digital and print-based media become more and more similar in classrooms and at home. Future research should go into the ways that motivation and family involvement can be improved in a methodical way, especially for groups who are at risk of falling behind because of socioeconomic or linguistic disadvantages. Additional research could look at how well traditional and digital literacy

techniques are balanced, how well family-school partnership models can be scaled, and what happens to students with persistent reading issues over the long term. Efforts should be made on a practical level to improve teacher professional development in differentiated literacy teaching, broaden access to high-quality resources, and encourage inclusive literacy cultures in both schools and communities.

On a personal level, the complexity, difficulties, and transformational potential inherent in encouraging reading ability in elementary school children have become more clear to me as a result of this research. This work has highlighted the crucial role that literacy plays, not just as a fundamental academic ability but also as a tool for lifelong learning, social integration, and personal empowerment. The research and critical thinking abilities have been improved, the value of interdisciplinary approaches has been highlighted, and a more complete knowledge of the interplay between theory, empirical data, and educational practice has been gained during the analytical process. These insights will influence continuing academic and professional involvement in the area of literacy education.

The results that are presented in this work completely answer the research question that guided it, and they show that a sensitive, integrated, and critically reflective strategy is needed to effectively promote reading competency. The results emphasize the necessity of flexible teaching strategies, motivational support, ongoing and early assessment, and the active involvement of families and communities in order to achieve sustainable literacy development. The study offers theoretical clarity and practical suggestions for educators, legislators, and stakeholders committed to improving literacy achievement for all students by situating these findings within the larger research environment and identifying possibilities for future advancement.

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