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ENHANCING READING LITERACY AMONG PRIMARY SCHOOL CHILDREN: AN INTEGRATED PEDAGOGICAL MODEL

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Abstract: The article examines effective ways of improving reading literacy among primary school children and proposes an integrated pedagogical model that combines accurate word recognition, oral reading fluency, vocabulary growth, comprehension strategy instruction, motivation, and formative assessment. The study is based on a qualitative synthesis of international reading frameworks, meta-analyses, and classroom-oriented research. Reading literacy is interpreted not as the mechanical pronunciation of words but as the ability to construct meaning, evaluate information, connect a text with prior knowledge, and use reading for learning and participation. The analysis shows that isolated exercises produce limited results when they are not connected to purposeful reading. Sustainable progress is more likely when teachers coordinate explicit phonics, rich oral language, repeated and expressive reading, systematic vocabulary instruction, dialogic discussion, and gradually released comprehension support. The proposed model can help primary teachers plan balanced literacy instruction and identify children who require timely additional support.

Keywords: reading literacy, primary education, reading comprehension, phonics, fluency, vocabulary, formative assessment, reading motivation

Annotatsiya. Maqolada boshlang‘ich sinf o‘quvchilarining o‘qish savodxonligini oshirishning samarali yo‘llari tahlil qilinadi hamda so‘zni aniq tanish, ravon o‘qish, lug‘at boyligini rivojlantirish, matnni tushunish strategiyalari, motivatsiya va shakllantiruvchi baholashni birlashtiruvchi integrativ pedagogik model taklif etiladi. O‘qish savodxonligi so‘zlarni mexanik talaffuz qilish emas, balki matn mazmunini yaratish, axborotni baholash, uni avvalgi bilimlar bilan bog‘lash va o‘qishdan ta’limiy hamda ijtimoiy maqsadlarda foydalanish qobiliyati sifatida talqin qilinadi. Maqolada to‘rt bosqichli dars sikli, matn tanlash mezonlari, differensial topshiriqlar va individual rivojlanishni kuzatish usullari yoritilgan.

Kalit so‘zlar: o‘qish savodxonligi, boshlang‘ich ta’lim, matnni tushunish, fonika, ravon o‘qish, lug‘at, shakllantiruvchi baholash

Аннотация. В статье анализируются эффективные способы повышения читательской грамотности учащихся начальных классов и предлагается интегрированная педагогическая модель, объединяющая точное распознавание слов, беглость чтения, развитие словарного запаса, стратегии понимания текста, мотивацию и формирующее оценивание. Читательская грамотность рассматривается не как механическое произнесение слов, а как способность конструировать смысл, оценивать информацию, связывать текст с предшествующими знаниями и использовать чтение для обучения и участия в общественной жизни. Описан четырехэтапный цикл урока, критерии отбора текстов, дифференцированные задания и способы наблюдения за индивидуальным прогрессом.

Ключевые слова: читательская грамотность, начальное образование, понимание текста, фонетический метод, беглость чтения, словарь, формирующее оценивание

Reading is the principal means through which primary school pupils gain access to the curriculum. A child who can decode a sentence but cannot identify its message, follow a causal chain, infer an unstated relation, or evaluate a claim remains only partially literate. Contemporary international frameworks therefore define reading literacy through purposeful meaning making. The PIRLS framework emphasizes understanding and using written language for literary experience and for acquiring information [1]. This definition is important for primary education because it links foundational skills with intellectual independence. It also warns against a narrow instructional practice in which speed and error counting become the only indicators of success. Accuracy matters, yet accuracy must lead to comprehension, response, and transfer.

The problem is especially significant in classrooms where pupils differ in preschool experience, home language, vocabulary, attention, access to books, and confidence. The same text may be effortless for one learner and cognitively exhausting for another. When instruction proceeds at a single pace, confident readers receive too little challenge while struggling readers accumulate failure. An effective literacy programme must therefore be both systematic and responsive. It should make the structure of written language explicit, provide abundant meaningful practice, and use evidence from daily performance to adapt teaching. Such a programme does not choose between skills and meaning; it organizes skills in the service of meaning [2].

Research on the science of reading has clarified several components that contribute to successful comprehension. Word recognition and language comprehension are indispensable, but they interact with vocabulary, background knowledge, executive functioning, motivation, and strategic activity [2, pp. S25-S44]. The implication for teachers is practical: no single method can carry the full responsibility for reading development. Systematic phonics can reduce uncertainty in word recognition [3, pp. 393-447], yet children also need oral language, knowledge-building texts, discussion, writing, and opportunities to read for genuine purposes. The present article develops an integrated model that coordinates these elements within the ordinary primary classroom.

The study uses qualitative literature synthesis, comparative analysis of reading frameworks, and pedagogical modelling. Sources were selected according to three criteria: relevance to children in the primary years, methodological authority, and usefulness for classroom decision-making. The corpus includes the PIRLS assessment framework, major reviews of beginning reading, research on comprehension instruction, and studies of motivation and formative assessment [1-9]. Rather than calculating a new statistical effect, the analysis identifies recurring principles across sources and translates them into an instructional sequence. This approach is appropriate because the article seeks to construct a coherent teaching model from an evidence base that is often presented in separate domains.

The analytical unit was a pedagogical function. Each recommended practice was examined in relation to the question it answers: How does the child recognize words? How does the child read connected text efficiently? How is meaning built from vocabulary, syntax, and prior knowledge? How does the learner monitor understanding? What sustains attention and willingness to read? How can the teacher observe progress without interrupting learning? The practices were then grouped into six interacting dimensions: foundational decoding, fluency, language and knowledge, comprehension strategies, engagement, and assessment. The resulting model is developmental

rather than rigid; teachers may increase or reduce the weight of a dimension according to learner need.

The first result of the synthesis is that foundational word recognition must be taught explicitly, cumulatively, and in a linguistically appropriate sequence. Beginning readers benefit when letter–sound relations are introduced systematically and then applied in words, sentences, and short connected texts [3]. Explicit instruction should include phonemic awareness, grapheme-phoneme correspondence, blending, segmenting, and analysis of common orthographic patterns. However, drills should be brief and immediately connected to meaningful reading. A child who learns a sound pattern should encounter it in a sentence that communicates something worth understanding. This connection prevents decoding from becoming an isolated performance and helps pupils see written language as a system for carrying ideas.

The second result concerns fluency. Fluency is not identical to reading as fast as possible. It includes accuracy, appropriate pace, phrasing, and expression. When word recognition consumes excessive attention, little capacity remains for constructing meaning. Repeated oral reading, echo reading, paired reading, and teacher modelling can help pupils coordinate accuracy with prosody. Short passages are preferable to long, tiring assignments, and improvement should be discussed in terms of clearer phrasing and better understanding rather than competition over words per minute. A brief question after each reading-What became clearer this time?-turns repetition into reflective practice rather than mechanical rehearsal.

The third result is the central role of vocabulary and knowledge. Comprehension depends on what words mean, how sentences are structured, and what the reader already knows about the topic. A pupil cannot infer why a character protects a harvest if the pupil lacks concepts related to season, labour, weather, and food production. Effective instruction therefore selects a small number of high-value words, explains them in child-friendly language, demonstrates them in several contexts, and invites pupils to use them orally and in writing. At the same time, a sequence of related texts should build knowledge across days. A coherent mini-unit about water, for example, can combine a story, an informational text, a diagram, and a short experiment.

The fourth result is that comprehension strategies are most useful when taught as flexible tools rather than labels to memorize. Predicting, questioning, clarifying, summarizing, visualizing, and inferring should be modelled through teacher think-alouds. The teacher demonstrates what a strategic reader notices: “This sentence does not state the reason directly, but the previous paragraph gives a clue.” Pupils then practise with prompts, collaborate with peers, and finally apply the strategy independently. Reciprocal teaching research shows the value of structured dialogue in which learners take responsibility for predicting, questioning, clarifying, and summarizing [7, pp. 117-175]. Strategy instruction becomes productive when it remains anchored in the actual demands of a text.

The fifth result relates to motivation and identity. Children read more willingly when they experience choice, competence, social interaction, and relevance. Motivation is not an entertaining addition after the “real” lesson; it affects attention, persistence, and the amount of voluntary reading [8]. Teachers can support motivation by offering two or three suitable text options, maintaining a non-punitive reading climate, celebrating thoughtful responses, and allowing pupils to recommend books to classmates. Public ranking and humiliating correction should be avoided because they turn

reading into a test of status. A developing reader needs frequent experiences of successful participation, including choral response, partner rehearsal, and access to texts at an attainable level.

The sixth result is the importance of formative assessment. End-of-term tests describe outcomes but do not show what to teach tomorrow. Daily evidence is more useful when it identifies the source of difficulty. A pupil may misunderstand a text because of inaccurate decoding, limited vocabulary, weak sentence comprehension, insufficient knowledge, or ineffective monitoring. Brief running records, oral retellings, vocabulary probes, response journals, and teacher observation can reveal these differences. Feedback should name the next step: "Your reading was accurate; now pause at punctuation so the meaning is clearer." Such feedback is specific, achievable, and connected to the learning goal [9].

The proposed lesson cycle begins with orientation. The teacher activates relevant knowledge, introduces the reading purpose, previews two or three essential words, and invites a brief prediction from the title or illustration. Orientation should not explain the entire text in advance. Its purpose is to remove unnecessary barriers while preserving curiosity. For an informational text, the teacher may ask pupils to sort two pictures or answer a quick question. For a narrative, the teacher may introduce the setting and a central dilemma. This stage normally takes five to eight minutes and creates a shared entry point for learners with different backgrounds.

The second stage is guided meaning construction. The teacher reads a selected section aloud or supports pupils in reading it, pausing at points where decoding, syntax, or inference may create difficulty. A think-aloud makes invisible reasoning visible, but the teacher avoids turning every sentence into an explanation. Short prompts such as "Which word tells us that?", "What changed?", or "Does this idea fit the previous paragraph?" maintain attention to evidence. Foundational instruction can be embedded here by examining a difficult word, morpheme, or spelling pattern that occurs naturally in the text. The goal is coordinated processing: pupils attend to print, language, and meaning at the same time.

The third stage is collaborative interpretation. Pairs or small groups complete a task that requires evidence from the text. They may sequence events, compare two characters, match headings to paragraphs, complete a cause-and-effect chart, or prepare one question for another group. The task should be intellectually clear and linguistically supported. Sentence frames can help multilingual pupils participate without reducing the complexity of the idea: "I think ___ because the text says ___." The teacher circulates, listens for misconceptions, and selects examples for whole-class discussion. Collaboration is valuable when it deepens interpretation; unstructured group work can merely distribute confusion.

The fourth stage is independent transfer. Pupils apply the target skill to a new paragraph, a related short text, or a brief writing task. Independence may involve silent reading followed by a written response, an oral summary, a labelled diagram, or a comparison with an earlier text. The teacher collects a small amount of evidence, not a large worksheet. A one-sentence exit response can reveal whether pupils identified the main idea and supporting detail. The next lesson begins from this evidence. Thus the cycle is not a one-time format but a feedback system connecting preparation, supported practice, social reasoning, and individual application.

Instructional dimension	Teacher action	Evidence of progress
Word recognition	Teach cumulative sound–symbol and word-pattern knowledge; connect it immediately to text.	Fewer decoding errors; more self-correction; accurate reading of unfamiliar words.
Fluency	Model phrasing and expression; use brief repeated, paired, and echo reading.	Smoother phrasing, appropriate pauses, improved retelling.
Vocabulary and knowledge	Preteach essential words; build concepts through connected texts and discussion.	More precise oral language; stronger explanations and inferences.
Comprehension	Model thinking; gradually release predicting, questioning, clarifying, and summarizing.	Responses supported by textual evidence; better monitoring of confusion.
Engagement	Provide attainable challenge, meaningful choice, peer talk, and respectful feedback.	Longer attention, voluntary reading, greater willingness to discuss texts.
Assessment	Use brief diagnostic observations and adapt instruction.	Clear individual next steps and reduced persistence of unnoticed difficulties.

The integrated model resolves a common false opposition between code-based and meaning-based instruction. Pupils require secure access to the written code, but they acquire that access in order to think with texts. The strongest programme therefore protects explicit foundational teaching while refusing to reduce reading to isolated subskills. Castles, Rastle, and Nation argue that productive reading instruction should move beyond polarized "wars" and combine evidence about alphabetic learning with evidence about language and comprehension [4, pp. 5-51]. The present model follows this principle by placing each component within a purposeful lesson cycle. Balance does not mean equal time every day; it means that no essential function is neglected across the instructional programme.

The model also has implications for differentiation. Differentiation should not create permanently low expectations for struggling readers. It should vary support, text length, grouping, rehearsal, and response mode while preserving a common intellectual purpose. One group may read a shorter version of the same topic with teacher support, another may read independently, and both

may answer the same conceptual question. Flexible grouping should change as evidence changes. When pupils are always placed in the same "weak" group, an instructional arrangement becomes an identity label. Responsive teaching instead treats difficulty as information about current support needs.

Multilingual classrooms require particular care. A child may possess rich knowledge and reasoning in one language while lacking the vocabulary to display it in the language of instruction. Teachers can use visuals, gestures, cognates, bilingual glossaries, partner talk, and brief opportunities to activate knowledge in the home language. These supports do not replace systematic learning of the instructional language; they create bridges to it. Assessment should distinguish language-learning needs from decoding difficulties whenever possible. A pupil who reads words accurately but cannot explain them may need vocabulary and oral language support rather than additional phonics.

Digital resources can widen access to texts, audio models, and practice, but technology should serve a defined literacy function. An application that rewards rapid clicking may create activity without comprehension. Useful digital tasks ask pupils to listen and follow print, annotate evidence, compare sources, record expressive reading, or receive immediate feedback on a targeted skill. Screen use should not displace teacher interaction, handwriting, physical books, or discussion. The criterion is pedagogical value: Does the resource help the learner notice language, construct meaning, practise at an appropriate level, or communicate an interpretation?

Family participation is another important condition. Schools should avoid assigning parents the role of specialist reading teachers, yet they can provide simple routines that make home reading supportive. A five-minute conversation-What surprised you? Which word was new? What do you think happens next?-is more meaningful than a signature proving that pages were completed. Families need access to suitable texts and guidance in a language they understand. Where books are scarce, the school can operate a rotating class library or provide short printed texts. The aim is to expand positive contact with written language without turning the home into an extension of testing.

Practical Recommendations

Primary teachers can implement the model through a manageable weekly structure. Two lessons may emphasize guided reading and comprehension, one may focus more strongly on foundational patterns and fluency, and one may connect reading with science, social studies, or creative writing. Every lesson should still contain a purpose, meaningful text, pupil talk, and brief evidence of learning. Teachers can maintain a simple class record with six columns corresponding to the model's dimensions. The record need not contain scores after every lesson; short notes such as "accurate but hesitant," "needs inference prompts," or "strong oral response, limited vocabulary" are sufficient to guide planning.

Text selection should be based on quality, accessibility, cultural relevance, and instructional value. A useful text offers something to think about, contains language worth learning, and is neither so easy that no growth occurs nor so difficult that meaning disappears. The classroom library should include narratives, poetry, biographies, explanations, instructions, diagrams, and age-appropriate digital texts. Pupils need experience with different text structures because the reading

demands of a story differ from those of a report or procedural text. Repeated exposure to coherent topics helps knowledge accumulate and reduces the disadvantage of limited background experience.

Intervention should begin early when a pupil shows persistent difficulty. Support is most effective when it is explicit, frequent, and closely aligned with classroom instruction. A short daily session targeting phonemic awareness, decoding, or fluency can prevent a small gap from becoming a broad comprehension problem. Progress should be reviewed after several weeks, and the plan should change if evidence does not improve. Waiting for failure is pedagogically and ethically weak. At the same time, intervention must include successful encounters with meaningful text so that the child's identity as a reader is protected.

Improving reading literacy in primary school requires a coordinated system rather than a collection of disconnected exercises. Children must learn how written words work, but they must also develop language, knowledge, strategic control, motivation, and the confidence to participate in a community of readers. The integrated model proposed in this article connects these dimensions through a four-stage lesson cycle and continuous formative evidence. Its central principle is that every component should contribute to purposeful meaning construction. When explicit teaching, rich texts, discussion, independent transfer, and timely support operate together, reading becomes both an academic foundation and a means of intellectual agency. The model can be adapted to different languages and curricula, provided that teachers respect the structure of the language, the developmental needs of pupils, and the cultural context of the classroom.

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