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LiRe

LIFELONG READERS

Research Report & Guidelines

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1. Attributes of a Lifelong Reader

- **A lifelong reader** is self- motivated, finds value and pleasure in reading, and thus reads, learns, and evolves throughout her/his lifetime. LiRe aspires to contribute to the effort of creating European schools that are populated by thousands of lifelong readers.

- **And this is the goal:** for every child to become a skilled, passionate, habitual, critical reader—as novelist Robertson Davies put it, to learn how to make of reading "a personal art." Along the way, CTL teachers hope our students will become smarter, happier, more just, and more compassionate people because of the worlds they experience within those hundreds of thousands of black lines of print. (Atwell 12)

- "**Reading for pleasure** is one very important and common manifestation of having a positive 'attitude to reading', which is another term frequently used in the research and writing in this area. Having a positive attitude to reading is obviously closely related to the concepts of 'reading engagement' and 'reading motivation' […]" (Lockwood 1).

- Guthrie and Wigfield (2000, p. 405) have defined **reading motivation** as 'the individual's personal goals, values and beliefs with regard to the topics, processes and outcomes of reading'. (qtd in Ross 4)

- Clearly, motivation is inherent in the term. But **engaged reading** involves more than motivation.

- When we say that someone is ***engaged*** in an activity, we often use the term to mean that he/she is involved at a deep level. Synonyms include absorbed, engrossed, interested, and involved. (Baket et al, 2000: 2)

- **Students are engaged readers when** they read frequently for interest, enjoyment and learning. The heart of engagement is the desire to gain new knowledge of a topic, to follow the excitement of a narrative, to expand one's experience through print. Engaged readers can find books of personal significance and make time for reading them. The investment of time is rewarded by the experience of immersion in the text itself. Engaged readers draw on knowledge gained from previous experiences to construct new understandings, and they use cognitive strategies to regulate comprehension so that goals are met and interests are satisfied. Benefits to readers may also occur through their satisfaction in processing valued information about a topic that plays a central role in their sense of self. Engaged readers are curious and involved in a literate lifestyle. (Baket et al, 2000: 2)

2. The benefits of reading engagement

- From the "Teaching Reading in Europe" Report: It has been consistently shown that **those who read more are better readers**. With an increased amount of reading, reading ability improves, which in turn encourages more reading (Cunningham and Stanovich, 1998). Furthermore, Clark and Rumbold's meta-review (2006) showed that reading for pleasure is positively linked to text comprehension and grammar, breadth of vocabulary, greater self-confidence as a reader and pleasure of reading later in life. (114)

- Reading for Change: Results from PISA 2000:

  Being more **enthusiastic about reading** and being a frequent reader was more of an advantage on its own **than having well-educated parents in good jobs**. (OECD, 2002: 3)

3. Teachers and librarians who promote reading

- **cognitive skills and reading motivation** are mutually reinforcing... rather than being alternatives, schools need to address **both simultaneously.** (OECD, 2002)
- Teachers place great emphasis not just on children acquiring specific reading skills but also on **promoting engagement and pleasure in reading** and they know what to do when a child does not seem motivated to read.
- (DfES, 2005: 4) (Lockwood 9)

- To promote engaged reading, instructional contexts must be **well designed**: 'In an engaging classroom, reading lessons are designed to develop long-term motivation, knowledge, social competence, and reading skill.'
(Guthrie & Anderson, 1999: 37). (Baker et al, 2000: 2-3)

- Students' sense of **competence** is promoted by providing them with materials to read that are challenging yet manageable;
- students' sense of **autonomy** is promoted by encouraging them to choose books of personal interest;
- and students' sense of **relatedness** is promoted by giving them the opportunity to discuss what they are reading with others.
- (Baker et al, 2000:10)

What the research shows is that:

- people become readers by doing lots of reading of extended text;
- that what motivates novice readers is the pleasure in the reading experience itself;
- and that libraries, schools and communities need to support pleasure reading by making the books accessible,
- by helping readers choose books,
- by celebrating and modeling the love of reading,
- and by creating communities of readers--either face-to-face or in an electronic environment--who share the excitement of books. (Ross, McKechnie & Rothbauer, 2006: ix)

A Teacher or School Librarian who promotes reading engagement:

❑ Is a reading model and communicates daily her/his enthusiasm about reading

❑ Is informed about and has read a high volume of quality texts for children and YA

❑ Creates a print- and technology- rich classroom library to entice children to read

❑ Organizes a reading environment where there is easy access to plenty of suitable texts (in print and on screen)

❑ Promotes "light reading" as well (comics, magazines, popular print, on-line reading, etc.)

❑ Encourages and enables students to choose texts that interest them

- ❑ Helps students become familiar with books and other texts
- ❑ Plans for social interaction and collaboration about books and reading: peer-to-peer recommendations, teaching and learning
- ❑ Provides incentives that reflect the value of reading
- ❑ Enhances student autonomy: motivating activities which are open and authentic tasks that promote learner choice and control
- ❑ Has high expectations and encourage students to do so as well
- ❑ Ensures that pupils are aware of what they are doing and how and why they are doing it

- Establishes 'real world interaction'
- Achieves expertise in teaching reading and helps children build the word-level foundation for engaged reading
- Helps children who experience reading difficulties
- Fosters reading for learning
- Provides sufficient time for in-class/library reading
- Reads aloud to children
- Builds towards coherent instruction
- Facilitates reading instruction through school-wide coordination
- Fosters home and community connections to support children's reading

- Avoids giving a negative message about reading
- Facilitates children's reading motivation
  - opportunities to choose books
  - interesting texts and challenging tasks
  - self-confidence
  - necessary reading skills
  - reading-related collaboration

- Building lifelong readers has to start here. Anyone who calls herself or himself a reader can tell you that it starts with encountering great books, heartfelt recommendations, and a community of readers who share this passion. (Miller 4)

Building whole-school communities of lifelong readers

The invisible ethos of the school and the visible physical environment (Lockwood)

- state of the art school library and full-time librarian/s
- substantial time devoted to reading
- school staff as role models of keen readers
- avoid giving a negative message about reading
- reading is celebrated publicly whenever and wherever possible (high profile)
- involves parents & community

Designing a successful reading-promotion program

- All staff is on-board and on the same page
- In-service training
- Needs Assessment
- Reading promotion objectives
- Action plan
- Evaluation of results

The Action Plan should take into account and plan about the following:

- Objectives
- For each objective the following should be identified
- Actions needed to achieve each objective
- Target Groups (added)
- Staff roles and tasks (added)
- Other people involved (added)
- Time scale
- Resources
- Success Criteria

The Action Plan should also recognize the **four partners** who need to be engaged in improving any aspect of a school:

- the staff;
- the children;
- the parents;
- the wider local community.