

Literature Review

Sustaining Engagement during Reading Activities

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Submitted: 22/03/2022

Revised: 25/04/2022

Accepted: 25/05/2022

How to cite this article: Sandy, F., & Fidian, A. (2022). Sustaining engagement during reading activities. *International Journal of Education, Language and Religion*, 4(1), 31-36. doi: 10.35308/ijelr.v4i1.5417

Abstract

Research shows that engagement in reading is one of the factors to motivate students' literacy learning development. The aim of this study is to synthesize and elaborate instructions that enable students' motivation for being engaged inside and outside classrooms. The method of this study is literature review using 16 articles. The review was presented in descriptive narration that discuss about multidimensional construct of engagement in reading activities and the instructional strategies to enhance engagement in reading. The results showed that there were not all reading instructions examined in the recent studies represented the entire aspects of engagement. Meanwhile, only few studies addressed the analysis of those aspects in the reading instruction approach used in the studies.

Keywords

Engagement; motivation; reading

Introduction

Engagement as one of the key factors of students' success in learning has broadly defined and examined in many educational research contexts. According to Skinner and Pitzer (2012), engagement is "a robust predictor of students' learning, grades, achievement test scores, retention, and graduation" (p. 21). In reading context, distinguished scholars focused their studies in examining the correlation of four variables of students' engagement, motivation, reading skills, and reading achievement across various ages and different genders. Ivey and Johnston (2013) noted that engagement is a pivotal component of classroom reading instruction for it is correlated explicitly with students' reading achievement.

Engagement is theoretically and practically related to motivation. In reading, motivation may be regarded as "reasons for reading" (Guthrie and Klauda, 2014) while engagement refers to the joint functioning of motivations and strategies during reading (Newman, Wehlage, and Lamborn, 1992). Guthrie et al. (1996) also defined engagement as the integration of intrinsic motivation, cognitive strategies, and conceptual learning from text. In their one-year study, they found out that increases in literacy engagement during the year were tied to increases in intrinsic motivation. However, it was not determined which one came first, the relation between engagement and motivation in their study was more reciprocal and mutual. In another study, Guthrie and Klauda (2014) also described engaged readers in their study as students who were energized by internal motivation such as intrinsic motivation, value, and perceived competence. Their study also showed significant correlation of engagement and



motivation practices across the three times period of their study. As previous studies showed their proportional correlation, it is crucial to enable engaging and motivating reading instructions in order to increase students' reading achievement in the classroom and maintain their engagement outside classroom.

Several studies examined instructional reading practices that could corroborate students' achievement. Reading instruction such as Concept Oriented Reading Instruction (CORI) was one of exemplary reading instruction that could enable students' engagement during classroom reading. In 2008, Guthrie et al. noted a direct evidence of how the amount of reading engagement improved reading comprehension during CORI. Also, the middle grade students who received CORI from the study of Guthrie and Klauda (2014) increased their reading comprehension strongly than those who received Traditional Instruction (TI). Meanwhile, in 2016 Kim et al. applied another instruction called Strategic Adolescent Reading Intervention (STARI) for below proficient scored students in middle school that also showed greater students gains than control students on measures of basic reading comprehension, word recognition, and morphological awareness. Although there were plausible findings of increases in students' reading achievement, it is also important to enhance reading instructions that can motivate students being engaged not only during inside classroom reading instructions but also outside instructions (Guthrie et al., 1996).

Sustaining reading engagement will sustain students' success inside and outside classroom reading activities and prepare for their success in college, career, and life by the time they graduate as it is aligned to Common Core State Standards (CCSS) for English Language Arts and Literacy. As such, this literature review is aimed to synthesize and elaborate instructions that enable students' motivation for being engaged inside and outside classrooms. Before that section, it is important to discuss a multidimensional construct of engagement in reading as the basic framework of designing classroom reading instructions which are motivating and engaging inside and outside classrooms.

Method

The method used in this study was literature review. The area of topics' articles reviewed in this study was articles that discussed about multidimensional construct of engagement and its application in reading activities. Keywords used to select the topics were: engagement in reading. There were 16 articles that had related topics are collected and chosen.

The data were analyzed by categorizing articles into two categories: 1) Articles related to multidimensional construct of engagement in reading activities; 2) Instructional Strategies to enhance engagement in reading. Each category was analyzed comprehensively. The results were presented in a descriptive narration that discuss about multidimensional construct of engagement in reading activities and the instructional strategies to enhance engagement in reading.

Results and Discussion

A Multidimensional Construct of Engagement

Most recently, engagement has been conceptualized as a multidimensional construct, consisting of behavioral (time on task), cognitive (strategic effort), and affective (interest in the topic and task) components (Fredricks, Blumenfeld, & Paris, 2004; Malloy, Parsons, & Parsons,^[1]_[SEP]2013; Parsons, Nuland, & Parsons,^[1]_[SEP]2014). Furthermore, Parsons et al. (2015) explained behavioral engagement as it relates to effortful participation, cognitive engagement covers strategic behavior, persistence, and meta-cognition, while affective engagement stresses interest, enjoyment, and enthusiasm.



In 2009, the Program for International Student Assessment (PISA) in which approximately 470,000 students completed the assessment in a form of questionnaire representing the United States, Ireland, Germany, Finland, and Korea (Brozo et al., 2014). The student questionnaire gathered data on three aspects of reading engagement: (1) enjoyment of reading, (2) time spent reading for enjoyment, and (3) diversity of texts read (i.e., a single type of text, such as newspapers, versus a wide variety of texts, such as newspapers, magazines, fiction, nonfiction, etc.). From the survey, Brozo et al. (2014) noted a trend that girls' reading literacy achievement and engagement was significantly higher than boys. The international survey from PISA addressed three aspects of engagement which cover the three-dimensional construct of engagement: (1) enjoyment as affective dimension, (2) time spent as behavioral dimension, and (3) diversity of texts as cognitive dimension.

Parsons et al. (2015) conducted a research in sixth grade classroom which also elaborated three types of engagement: behavioral, cognitive, and affective in examining the classroom tasks. They found out that behavioral and cognitive dimensions were represented by offering multiple levels of challenge. The teacher in their study pushed students to deepen their critical thinking skills and to explore challenging questions whose answers required expanding background knowledge with new knowledge (p. 229). Meanwhile, affective domain was intensified by the excitement and energy that the students feel when the lesson was introduced. After doing an interview to the students of that yearlong study, Parsons et al (2015) identified collaboration and teacher support as aspects of academic work which were engaging for students.

Meanwhile, studies from Guthrie and Klauda (2014) and Kim et al. (2016) only examined the behavioral aspects of engagement. Guthrie and Klauda (2014) used the term dedication for behavioral construct which was associated with classroom motivational support and found out that students within CORI in their study performed stronger motivational-engagement support than those who were inside TI. In a classroom intervention, STARI, conducted by Kim et al. (2016), behavioral engagement was assessed through individuals' rates of completion of STARI workbook activities but the result of this assessment was not addressed explicitly in their study.

However, Ivey and Johnston (2013) noted limited information on another possible dimension of reading engagement such as agentic engagement (Reeve, 2012). It is aligned with the definition of reading from Rosenblatt's transactional theory of literature as interactive transaction between the reader and the text. In their study, they documented shifts in students' agency through the elaboration of five different domains of agency: (1) agency in reading, (2) social agency, (3) moral agency, (4) agency with respect to one's life narrative, and (5) agency in self-regulation. They also found out evident, "engagement was not just represented in the time students spent reading but also in how they talked about their involvement with text, which they juxtaposed with passive, compliant reading of the past" (p. 261). Moreover, agency in reading was closely tied to "the widespread talk inspired by students' experiences with books, both within and outside of school and with peers, teachers, and family members" (p.261). The study from Ivey and Johnston (2013) added a dimension of engagement aspects and offered other possible dimensions that can be examined in further research. It is also worth to note that this layer of agentic dimension along with other three dimensions, are potentially enhanced in reading instruction in order to promote sustainable engagement in reading inside and outside classroom.

Instructional Strategies

To develop reading instructions, there were criteria of supportive classroom conditions to motivate students being engaged with reading activities. Similarly, Guthrie and Cox (2001) pointed out that engaged readers didn't only refer to students who are intrinsically motivated to read but also students who are strategic and wide and frequent readers. Therefore, teachers need to consider practical classroom environment that activate students' intrinsic and extrinsic motivation to reinforce their engagement during reading. Moreover, it is also important to consider classroom activities that encourage



engagement outside classroom. Accordingly, Guthrie et al. (1996) suggested to not only view engaging instruction as a tool to increase reading achievement but most importantly to motivate students being engaged in reading during instruction and outside instructions.

There were lots of practical classroom instructions designed and examined by scholars which could motivate students' engagement during reading. Some of them were represented all aspects of engagement: behavioral, cognitive, affective, and cognitive but others were involved two to three dimensions. Most of the instructions were only addressed classroom engagement and few instructions promoted engagement inside and outside classrooms. Thus, this part of review will critically synthesize reading instructions to help teachers contextualizing in their own practice.

In 1993, Concept Oriented Reading Instruction (CORI) was developed by Dr. John Guthrie and his teams (Guthrie et al., 1996). Their article in 1996 documented their new approach of CORI which examined 3rd and 5th graders' engagement in literacy and science. The instruction consisted of four phases of instructional framework: observe and personalize, search and retrieve, comprehend and integrate, and communicate to others. In the first phase, students were observing concrete objects and event then encouraged to ask critical question. After that, students were participated to search answers using classroom books on their own. Still related to the previous phase, in the third phase, teacher emphasized strategies such as summarizing, comparing and contrasting, note taking, critical reflection and so on to help students. The last phase was a chance for students to communicate to others by creating a written report, a class-authored book, dioramas, charts, or informational stories. Although their study didn't straightforwardly examine a multidimensional construct of engagement, their finding showed growth of literacy engagement as students searched for information in multiple texts, represented ideas through drawing and writing, transferred conceptual knowledge to new information. Those students' performance showed a significant representation of behavioral and cognitive aspects by having students participate on task and being strategic.

Similarly, in the following studies which involved CORI represented behavioral and cognitive aspects of engagement through their integrated classroom instruction across different themes and grades. For example, Wigfield et al. (2008) examined the effect of students' motivation-engagement in students reading comprehension through CORI which involved 4th grade students. In 2013 and 2014, 7 graders were participated in CORI. Guthrie et al. (2013) tried to see relationship among reading instruction, students' motivations, engagement and achievement while Guthrie and Klauda (2014) tried to see effects of reading comprehension, motivations, and engagement by comparing CORI with Traditional Instruction (TI). Although the three studies had different aims, they used similar approach, CORI to motivate students being engaged during reading. However, CORI elaborated in this review didn't happen to address engagement outside classroom. Its success of implementation was only presented in classroom context but if it remains being applied in a long term, there is possibly a positive sign of engagement outside classroom as well since CORI also offers agency through discussion among students. The possible talks will take place not only inside but also outside classroom with positive encouragement from teacher and further research in CORI may examine this dimension of engagement to signify its success in corroborating students' engagement inside and outside classroom.

In their article, Morrison and Wlodarczyk (2009) discussed 1st graders' reading instructions through alpha boxes, making connection, and discussion web. Students in their study used alpha boxes to note examples under the appropriate alphabet letter in each box. They encouraged students to generate questions, highlight important concepts, make connections; provide explanations, locate, identify, and discuss unfamiliar words, and present different points of view. In making connections teachers taught that students' schemata include experiences, which are lived through events they have encountered as part of their daily lives; knowledge, information they already have stored in their minds about a specific topic; and thoughts and opinions, ideas they have about people, places, and events in our world.



Meanwhile, discussion web is a graphic organizer that enables students to examine both sides of an issue before agreeing on a conclusion. In their study, discussion allowed students to revisit, question, and clarify text ideas, thus promoting higher cognitive abilities. The handful strategies elaborated by Morrison and Wlodarczyk (2009) are essential to help students comprehending texts. Also, it can be seen from the excerpts that the aspects of engagement were represented entirely as students being on task, showed a sense of interest, taught to be strategic, and had a thoughtful talk during classroom. Moreover, although this sense of engagement was shown clearly in classroom only, with teacher's encouragement, it can also be promoted outside classroom.

Meanwhile, Heller (2006) designed a book club which promote engaging instruction that emphasize on intertextuality. In Heller's study (2006), intertextuality concept was seen as our ability to make connections to our own lives, as well as the lives of others in the world at large. In his study, students were participated in before, during, and after reading activities. In before reading activity, prior conceptual knowledge was activated in each session. In during reading activity, students were engaged in an interactive read aloud event. In after reading activity, students were encouraged to be active in discussion through reader-response questions, critical responses, and creative thinking via open-ended prompts. His study clearly analyzed a multidimensional construct of engagement in the dimensions of behavioral, cognitive, and affective. Students' behavioral construct was represented through their ongoing participation during the task. Their cognitive engagement was activated as they were encouraged to use intertextual connection in before reading activity and to use composing process in after reading activity. Heller (2006) also presented students' affective dimension as he observed tone of voice, body language, laughter, facial expressions, and dramatic gestures. Those were evidence of aesthetic and efferent responses interacting synergistically as the children expressed awe and wonder about new and interesting information. Although it was not explicitly discussed the dimension of students' agency, it was vividly clear through the excerpts that students had agency as they interacted with texts and with other classroom members.

In addition, a notable reading instruction which enabled a multidimensional construct of engagement analysis in the four aspects of behavioral, cognitive, affective, and agentive was conducted by Ivey and Johnston (2013). Their study involved 7th grader students as the participants in a yearlong study which emphasized on supporting autonomy and personal relevance. The teachers in their study focused on engagement, following and stimulating students' lines of inquiry rather than doing comprehension checks. The students read at their own pace and were no longer held responsible for any assignments associated with the books (e.g., projects, quizzes). The teachers encouraged the students to read at home, and no additional homework for English was assigned. Their approach noted three central components of shift in learning: letting the students to choose reading material and how to respond and introducing them to many personally relevant books. In their study, the aspects of engagement were presented entirely as students shifted their agency during classroom reading instruction. Most importantly, through students' interview it was notably documented that students used their agency through widespread talk inspired by students' experiences with books, both within and outside of school and with peers, teachers, and family members.

Conclusion

Many researches showed the interrelated connection among engagement, motivation, students reading skills, and achievement in classroom context. The positive connection can be activated through designing instructions that motivate students' engagement during reading activity. To design an engaging reading instruction, it is significance to consider a multidimensional construct of engagement which covers aspects of behavioral, cognitive, affective, and agentive. However, there are not all reading instructions examined in the recent studies represented the entire aspects of engagement. Meanwhile, only few studies addressed the analysis of those aspects in the reading instruction approach used in the



studies. Thus, it is important to examine the four aspects of engagement in the further research of reading instruction. More importantly, Guthrie et al (1996) suggested to not only view engaging instruction as a tool to increase reading achievement but most importantly to motivate students being engaged in reading during instruction and outside instructions. It was a notable advice to direct on further research in consider reading instruction which maintain engagement not only in classroom situation but also outside classroom so that students are prepared to be success in their school and real lives.

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