

DEVELOPING READING HABITS OF SCHOOL CHILDREN IN THE DIGITAL ERA: WITH SPECIAL REFERENCE TO RGS GUWAHATI

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Abstract *It is very important to develop reading habits in the child as this inculcates Positive imagination, creative thinking in the child, makes the brain more creative. Reading habits will help children become stronger readers and students. The first step is developing positive reading habits with your child.*

Keywords: *Reading Habits, Computerized Library, Children Library, School Library*

INTRODUCTION

I love to lose myself in other men's minds. When I am not walking, I am reading. I cannot sit and think. Books think for me. – Charles Lamb If the first button of a man's coat is wrongly buttoned all the rest are certain to be crooked, remarked – Giordano Bruno. Reading can definitely be taken as the first button in the garment education. It is not the sole object of school, but it is almost impossible to think of education without thinking about what happens and what is implied when a human being tries to get meaning out of the written or printed symbols (Ahuja, 1982).

READING

Reading is a precise process. It involves exact, detailed, sequential perception and identification of letters, words, spelling patterns and large language units. More simply stated, reading is a psycholinguistic guessing game. It involves an interaction between thoughts and language. Efficient reading does not result from precise perception and identification of all elements, but from skill in selecting the fewest, most productive cues necessary to produce guesses which are right the first time. The ability to anticipate that which has not been seen, of course, is vital in reading, just as the ability to anticipate. What has not yet been heard is vital in listening. Today, the reading has social, academic, economical and survival significance, because democracy of a country can survive when people at large have reading competence. Reading is always a means to an end and not to end itself. Further, reading is the process of using over 'eyes', our 'mind', to what the writer was attempting to

convey. Therefore, reading gives both power, and pleasure with understanding, by reading the material as a unified whole, by which one can expand the frontiers of knowledge and scholarship.

NATURE OF READING

Five generalizations is flow from research of the past decade on the nature of reading. (i) The first generalization is that reading is a constructive process. (ii) The second generalization is that reading must be fluent. (iii) The third is that reading must be strategic. (iv) The fourth is that reading requires motivation. (v) The fifth is that reading is a continuously developing skill.

STAGES OF READING

The good reading habit is to be based on four stages: (i) Exploring (ii) Checking the Vocabulary (iii) Analyzing for Comprehension (iv) Synthesizing for Understanding.

MOTIVES

The motives which impel the individual to read are delineated by Shera as follows to improve the capacity to earn; to achieve power; to increase security; to escape anxiety; to solve personal problems; to experiment vicarious adventure; to indulge in aesthetic enjoyment or emotional excitement; to gravity desire for prestige and to identify one's self with a group. The other objectives of reading are – to satisfy a person's curiosity; to external ones horizon of knowledge; to form set opinions; to get acquainted with

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the current affairs; to develop critical thinking and mature judgment; and to know the heritage of one's own country and its literature. Reading aim is also occupational leisure and pleasure, it will make our hours pleasant, as long as we live.

SCHOOL ENVIRONMENT TO PROMOTE READING HABIT

Schools are regarded as second homes to children and they play an important role in developing their reading habits. Schools should be equipping students with the skills of learning to read and reading to learn to improve their overall capacity for life-long learning and whole-person development. They need to promote a reading culture both inside and outside the four walls of the classroom. The development of students' reading skills should start at an early age and attention should be given to the early primary years when the students are taught to learn to read and read to learn at the same time. One of the ways of developing students' reading habits is incorporating reading in different subject areas, not only in the languages. Reading should not only be done in English, Hindi and the some other language lessons, but also in other subjects such as science, social studies and mathematics. For students to read effectively, teachers should explicitly teach students to use various reading strategies such as making connections to texts, visualizing and asking questions. Students may already be using some reading strategies, but they may not be aware of them. However, as they learn to read more complicated materials, students will need to use reading strategies purposefully. Thus, teachers have to help students apply reading strategies, which also include predicting, synthesizing, reading between the lines and determining the importance of what they are reading.

For implementing a home reading program I start a roster for all students, in which students take a book home every day and they need to read it and note down some tough word and next show me. It will also help children develop a reading habit. For this program, students are also expected to read at least 10 to 15 minutes every night and write comments in their reading log about the book that they have read. This program encourages parents, especially those who have children in the early years, to set aside time and read stories to their kids. Setting up reading corners in classrooms and arranging flexible and structured reading time-slots in the timetable would help children develop a love for books. Reading corners do not have to be huge, but should include a range of story books and other books which will be put in the mini-libraries in their classrooms. They can ask their students to bring some of their storybooks, even old magazines and newspapers, to be placed in the reading corners. Apart from the above there should be assign library class for each and every class within the Time Table. Schools have to make

sure that students are exposed to materials from across all genres, including information reports, newspapers and even comics would help them improve their literacy. Highly literate countries include Finland, South Korea and Hong Kong, according to the study. Besides improving their literacy, reading also helps students become good writers. Reading and writing are closely interwoven. It is no doubt that students' writing is strongly influenced by their reading. Their ability to write with creative style, complex and correct grammatical structures, and accurate spelling is the result of their exposure to language input. Through reading, students see the author's word choices, treatment of information and use of other language features.

ROLE OF SCHOOL LIBRARIES TO DEVELOP READING HABIT

Reading assists students in expanding their topics for writing and increasing their vocabulary. It also aids students in improving their skills in spelling. To instill a love of reading in students, school libraries play a vital role. Libraries should be easily accessible by students, even during snack time, lunch breaks and after school. They should be strategically located and not physically distant from classrooms. It is important for schools to think of the location as well as what goes on and what takes place within the libraries. Schools need to make libraries an inviting space for learning and a focal point of ongoing student inquiry. This can be done through numerous activities, such as storytelling in libraries on certain days. Having a storytelling program in which librarians, teachers and parent volunteers take turns in sharing stories with students promotes the use of libraries in schools. The role of librarians is currently changing from being that of "keeper of books" to "information specialist". School librarians nowadays are actively taking part in acquiring quality reading and learning materials, and providing students with necessary information skills. Organizing a buddy reading program in which older, more advanced students read stories to younger ones would also help children get hooked on reading. Students can make new friends with others, too. The buddy reading program can be conducted during a "Language Week" or an as a whole-school program in which students read to their buddies for 30 to 40 minutes. Parental support is crucial and there has to be ongoing collaboration between family and school. After all, parents remain as first educators of children and teachers as facilitators of learning.

Some of the major steps taken by our library to promote the reading habits of the children are as follows:

- Read Program (throughout the academic session) in this program from our library side we give one book to each and every student from grade IV to XII for a whole month. Last week of that particular month we

organized on competition either a book review or cover design or a write-up on particular character from the book. The winner three students from all the grade gets some prizes and goes for a coffee with principal. Really we surprised that this program is very successful and still going on smoothly.

- Story telling session thrice in an academic session for the student of grade Nursery to VIII.
- Book exhibitions on some special occasion throughout the academic session.
- Book fair thrice in an academic session for the whole school.
- Some other activities like book pocket designing, book cover designing, Book mark designing etc.

READING IN COMPUTERISED LIBRARY

We are living in an era of instability, insecurity and constant change, the knowledge acquired by a person during the formal education becomes obsolete at a very rapid rate in the digital environment. Lifelong learning is the only way to service and thrive in the rapidly changing environment. Internet has revolutionized the concept of libraries and changed the way the information is processed, stored, transmitted, retrieved and disseminated. It holds large volumes of electronic information in almost all fields of human knowledge. The library environment is currently undergoing a rapid and dynamic revolution leading to new generation of libraries with an emphasis on e-resources –subscription is one of the emerging tool kit for libraries to survive in the present circumstances. The gap between the expectations of the users, availability of users, availability of resources and capabilities of libraries are widening with each passing day. Therefore, the need to restructure the library services for enhancing the speed, quality and productivity of the library services. The growth of library networks and knowledge sharing activities are quite vital for the present day library and information service. Human knowledge is growing on hyper media exponentially. Here measurement of knowledge does not depend upon totality of printed publications available world over. It is internet which actually accounts the growth of knowledge. Knowledge grows in every nanosecond, exceeding the exponential growth value as considered in case of printed publications. The exponential growth of knowledge now is not applicable for measuring the growth of knowledge. This has brought major changes in our existing communication of data and information. All areas of human knowledge have been influenced immensely. “The increase in television viewing has affected threading habit in India like in no other country”. The publishing industry is booming in the country more than 70,000 new titles being published

every year and lucrative career opportunities galore in the industry. While E-Books might be hitting the market, paper books are still the cheapest storing information. Reading book is a sensory perception. It is engagement of mind and a lot of imagination takes place while reading a book and therefore “We should celebrate books and celebrate reading”. The growth and development of information technology will not pose a challenge to the publishing industry, but will be an added advantage. Publication of books will continue to be part of the knowledge industry and there would not be any substitute for books. Books give us the knowledge and awareness to decide what is right and wrong in life. The good books bring out positive changes in the readers and in particular among children at an impressionable age. The role of libraries in providing widespread and inclusive access to knowledge is widely acknowledged. In today’s context, libraries have to play two distinct roles –to serve as a local center of information and knowledge, and be a local gateway to national and global knowledge.

CHANGING ROLE OF LIBRARIES

To serve the mobile patrons remotely is no doubt a challenge for the library is vital for enhancing the quality of E-learning and distance education in all its aspects. Particularly a back bone in the form of digital library is needed where information resources are converted in the digital form, stored in multimedia repositories and made available through digital platforms and web-based services. Further, the library will have to transform into E-mobile library providing services on the 24/7 basis and in the personalized manner say, on the PDA (Personal Digital Assistance) or mobile phone of the individual. Developing an exclusive Library Web Portal, building institutional repository and enriching them are thus important responsibilities for the library. Tools like Data Mining, Web 2.0 and Library 2.0 and their future versions will have to be routinely used for this purpose. In this context the library will have to prepare to start the ‘new age’ services Encompassing the following facts* Instructing ‘invisible’ library users who remotely Web and information searching to minimize the information overload and resulting anxiety. *Bringing mobile services. *Imparting information literacy covering library literacy, media literacy, computer literacy, internet literacy, research literacy and critical thinking. *Managing man – machine collaboration. *Promoting E-Learning and E-Research.

Keeping mind of all the above discussion I tried to help our teachers and the student community in these ICT based environment make information available all the time whenever they need develop some of the services for them like.

- My library Blog: www.rgsresourcecentercumlibrary.wordpress.com

- My Virtual Library Link: www.wakelet.com/@libraryRGSG
- My Library on Mobile: My Linktree: <https://linktr.ee/royalglobalschoollibrar>
- And all three services is running smoothly and response is remarkable for the library.

CONCLUDING REMARKS

Information revolution is posing several challenges to the library and we are bound to change accordingly. Influence of electronic and digital technology may lead to “Less-Paper” Society, but, “both books and electronics documents are going to stay side by side, and each has a definite role to play in ‘information communication’ thus spoke Dr. P. S. G. Kumar. Despite the global information infrastructure, Information High-ways, Optical technology, Multimedia, Hypermedia, Virtual Library, etc. The domain of print media do exists and with all advanced technologies peripherals, may further give a boost to reading and reading habit.

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