

**THE EDUCATIONAL AND PEDAGOGICAL SIGNIFICANCE OF DEVELOPING  
READING LITERACY BASED ON INTERNATIONAL ASSESSMENT PROGRAMS**

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**Abstract:** This article provides a comprehensive overview of international assessment programs and the educational and pedagogical significance of developing reading literacy. It also discusses the alignment of reading literacy with international assessment standards. The essence, goals, and objectives of reading lessons in primary grades are also analyzed.

**Keywords:** Reading literacy, assessment, PIRLS, ePIRLS, education, pedagogy, lesson, international assessment, State Education Standards (SES), text.

**Introduction:** The scope of reading literacy encompasses two main objectives regarding students' comprehension: acquiring literary experiences and obtaining and utilizing information. It is also based on four comprehension processes (locating, inferring, integrating, and evaluating) to assess primary school students' reading comprehension. Such an approach to reading literacy implements various theories constructively and interactively. Text meaning is expressed through the interaction between the student and the text according to a specific reading style. A student serves as an individual who quickly grasps the meaning of the text, reflects on it, is aware of effective reading strategies, and engages in metacognitive thinking about reading.

**Mayn Boydy:** The reading process, including beginning, middle, and end stages, involves students' language skills, cognitive and metacognitive strategies, and foundational knowledge and skills for constructing meaning. Additionally, creating a reading environment motivates and engages students, facilitating comprehension, though the environment must set certain requirements to ensure proper understanding.

Informative texts are written and read based on specific purposes. Their primary function is to provide information; hence, authors create them with particular goals. In many informative texts, facts are presented directly, such as procedural steps or biographical details. Nevertheless, some informative texts may carry subjectivity, including interpretative comments or persuasive essays, allowing authors to convey thoughts and facts to readers effectively.

In PIRLS and ePIRLS programs, the four comprehension processes are critical for developing questions aimed at assessing reading comprehension for each text or set of texts. During text interaction, students demonstrate their knowledge and experience in understanding written materials.

Reading lessons in primary grades hold a unique place in the educational system because literacy, moral education, and pedagogical values are fundamental. Other subjects cannot be effectively taught without reading instruction. Students must actively engage in lessons from the beginning, accurately and efficiently reading and comprehending texts. Through reading lessons, students acquire knowledge, skills, and competencies according to the State Education Standards (SES).

Reading literacy encompasses various cognitive and linguistic competencies, from understanding individual words to analyzing grammatical and linguistic structures, linking textual meaning to one's worldview. It also develops metacognitive competencies, i.e., knowing and appropriately applying strategies necessary for interacting with texts. Metacognitive skills develop when students think, observe, and direct their reading activities purposefully. Although "literacy" generally refers to an individual's capacity to learn, utilize, and communicate written and published information, it also pertains to acquiring knowledge in specific subjects or fields.

This definition serves to clarify "reading literacy" as active, purposeful, and effective reading in various contexts and for multiple objectives. Teaching native language and reading lessons with modern technologies and literary examples enhances students' knowledge, skills, and competencies. Strengthening reading literacy helps students understand texts deeply and develop critical thinking.

Developing reading literacy based on international assessment programs (PISA, PIRLS) fosters students' abilities to comprehend, analyze, and apply information in real-life situations. It encourages critical thinking, independent inquiry, and prepares students to be competitive in the modern information society.

Educational Significance:

Working with texts: Students learn to extract relevant information and respond, rather than memorize.

21st-century skills: Evaluating information reliability and drawing logical conclusions.

Methodological support: Internationally standardized digital resources and guides assist teachers.

Alignment with national curriculum: Prepares students to meet national educational goals and international standards.

For primary school graduates (Grade 4), reading literacy levels according to SES are assessed by:

Reading quality: Conscious and fluent reading, extracting main ideas.

Analysis: Distinguishing facts and author opinions, drawing logical conclusions.

International standards: PIRLS-aligned criteria assess students' ability to search for and interpret information.

International assessment programs serve as a mirror of education quality, diagnosing gaps in the national system rather than merely providing rankings. Reading literacy shifts students from rote memorization to comprehension, analysis, and practical information usage, which is essential in modern life.

Teacher and Methodology:

Improving reading literacy depends not only on textbooks but also on teachers' methodological skills. New SES and international standards require teacher creativity and interactive engagement with students.

**Conclusion:** Reading literacy is key to mastering all subjects. Without comprehension, students cannot fully understand subjects like physics or mathematics. Therefore, reading literacy remains central to national educational reforms. Education should combine theory with practice, enhancing students' abilities to read, understand, and think critically. At this stage, students should express their thoughts clearly and fluently.

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