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## ***THE FORMATIVE ROLE OF READING IN PERSONALITY DEVELOPMENT***

**Marilena Ticusan, Assoc. Prof., PhD, "Spiru Haret" University**

*Abstract: Nowadays, children / youngsters give increasingly less importance to reading and, particularly, to understanding the text they read. But how could they understand it, if most of them go through the pages of a book by obligation, the number of pages read being more important than the acquired information, the depth of feelings trapped in the world of words or the large variety of spiritual experiences that creep into the soul while reading you penetrate to the core of the action. The school has the privilege of determining largely the future becoming of the individual, the profession to be pursued and mostly the know-how that the individual carries on. Thus, the book readers grow in school, and the teachers' responsibility is to kindle the passion for reading in the heart of the small potential readers. They also have a responsibility to compete with the media and computer games making reading not only a viable alternative but a favourite one. It is far from being an easy task but once this war for the time of the students is won, we may consider that we paid a good deal of the moral duty towards students. The personality of many students is already outlined by the end of school, and this is exactly the school's mission – shaping the student's personality.*

**Keywords:** *reading, personality development, feelings, involvement*

### **Introduction**

Reading offers the reader, besides the satisfaction any reading brings, unique opportunities for reflection and spiritual experiences. It calls for introspection, contributing substantially to the formation and shaping the character and behaviour of the reader. At school age, reading has a decisive role in the improvement of language by forming and development of an appropriate vocabulary. The wide variety of artistic creations belonging to different literary genres and species, highlights the children's responsiveness to beauty, their desire for knowledge. Among the fiction creations, tales and stories remained over time the most popular works among children. Their instructive and educational value is great, as they bring a valuable contribution to the development of knowledge processes, affective processes, to the formation of will and character traits, to the formation of children's personality. Through readings expressing conflicts between the two forces of good and evil, small readers form their representations and notions of justice, honesty, courage, bravery, determination, perseverance, diligence.

#### **Theoretical approach**

Reading, speaking and writing have a special role in human accomplishment. As it becomes a skill, an usual activity, reading makes one complete, speech helps one to easily express and writing to express precisely, clearly, coherently. Reading fosters sensitivity and imagination, it shapes the characters, contributes to moral and civic education, it helps man in his aspirations for self-improvement.

To get pupils to live the whole set of feelings arising from the content of a text it is necessary for the teacher to be moved sincerely and convincingly by the work of art; in this way the teacher will send its own natural emotion to those he/she trains and educates. This emotional act is done usually during the first contact with literary creation and during its analysis.

Between the ages of 7 to 10 years, the development of children thinking continues with increasing intensity. In addition to the fairy tales that delight their childhood and stimulate their imagination, children begin to enjoy ever more historical stories, descriptions

of famous journeys, scientific or fantastic stories. As at this age their power of assimilation is high, children begin to be passionate about shorter short stories, short stories and even novels understandable to them. The period between the ages of 10 to 14 years is the transition from childhood to adolescence. Logical thinking is enhanced, the child's possibilities to understand are multiple, the child's experience is rich, and the knowledge is varied. The basic concern at this age is represented by the future occupations, the life the child will have when he/she grows up. In this period of life romance manifests freely. Children dream of great deeds, lofty feelings, extraordinary events in which they can prove their courage, bravery, cleverness. It is an age of great contradictions, of wild crazy, of unexplained melancholy, of the audacity taken to rudeness or excessive shyness. It is the period of great passions. They see themselves traveling on a ship caught by the storm in mid-ocean or on board of a missile aircraft crossing the outer space. The historical novel, the adventure novel, the scientific stories, the biographies of famous people, the shorter short stories, short stories and novels on contemporary people's lives, all offered generously to the little reader, meeting its passion for knowledge and desire to act.

The child's mental development is an extremely complex process. At the end of this process we must find a mature person, adaptable to the society in which he/she lives. This process is active, dynamic, achieved through the interaction of external factors with the individual peculiarities of the child. Heredity, social environment and education are considered important factors in human becoming.

#### Research data

The familiarity of the little reader with a text message is determined also by his/her ability to understand the figurative meaning of words and combination of words, to orient at least by intuition in some of the simplest elements of literary theory. Thus, students will distinguish between a prose text and poetry, a fictional text and a scientific text, a narration and a description. Through contact with different types of texts studied in class, using the explanatory lecture, students will be used to apprehend the text also in terms of its artistic form, which will help the student to gradually understand literary art, to seek it, taste it, create it. The teacher must not request from the children only what is communicated in a text, but also to propose every time to discuss how the author communicates, knowing that literature is an art, a specific form of reflection of reality with great evocative and influencing power.

From year to year the teachers ascertain with concern the decrease of the interest in reading books. At present, it has become increasingly clear that we need a change of approach to the act of reading. Teaching experience has shown us that there it is not enough to "equip" the student with a suite of theoretical concepts, hoping that later in its adult life, it will turn to books; we must act so that reading is seen as a pleasure, as a value-adding, useful activity.

Correct oral and written speech – an important objective in primary education - is one of the basic tools of intellectual work, without which the future intellectual development of students cannot be conceived. The purpose of reading in primary school period and beyond, is to progressively shape a young man with basic communicational and literary culture, being able to understand the surrounding world, to communicate and interact with others, expressing thoughts, states, feelings, opinions, to be respondent to the nature and man-made beauty and, in the future, to be able to continue learning at any stage of its existence.

Knowledge, precision, expressiveness and the persuasive power of communication are given, largely, by the quality of the vocabulary.

That is why the activities of students' vocabulary enrichment, accuracy, activation and enhancing are of particular importance in the process of composition skills. Students' vocabulary enrichment is one of the priority tasks in cultivating their expressing, task achieved through systematic work in the study of all school subjects. The source of new

words is an activity of reality abbreviation (observation, intuition of natural environment) of science and culture (discussions in class and outside the class, readings).

Communication must facilitate learning social roles and human contacts which means assimilation of civilized dialogue skills, listening, talking, asking questions and responding, issuing and deciphering verbal, para-verbal and nonverbal messages.

From literature, children know the faces of people with special qualities, heroes with positive features and activities that distinguish themselves through work, scientific discoveries, the struggle for homeland defence etc. Compliance with truthfulness requires characters to be reflected in the works according to reality. In works where the characters are children, it is necessary for them to be painted with natural inclinations and impulses, in compliance with the objective living conditions and with their mental peculiarities, so as not to appear created based on templates, idealized, artificially presented.

The main factors that help children in improving their education are school and family. For good collaboration between these two factors much communication is needed from them.

The educational influences of the family on children are manifested by patterns of conduct provided by family members, as well as by the existing psychosocial climate in the family.

The investigations concluded that intellectual stimulation in early childhood, parental encouragement and continuous support are key factors in developing the child's personality.

The aim of the research was to identify and capitalize on ways to improve educational practice to develop interest and motivation for individual study.

Research objectives

Improve the general and particular individual study capacity.

Fostering open cognitive skills and attitudes.

Identification of new problems and problem situations

18 fourth grade pupils were included in the study. 9 children come from organized families, 7 pupils come from organized families but with stressed relations and three children come from broken families. The pupils are normally developed in terms of physical capacity and they show mental and action traits typical for their age. In the thinking process independence, flexibility begin to manifest and critical thinking, based on logic, becomes more apparent. Attention becomes voluntary, stable. Students show a vivid, fantastic imagination.

It is now that more extrinsic motivation acts such as scores, moral and material rewards. Therefore, it is necessary to develop and realize internal reasons, such as the thirst for knowledge, love and passion for learning, giving superior facets to student's mental development.

Regarding the affective processes, we can say that they are alive and powerful. Some of them are impressed by everything, inspired by everything, everything cheers them or saddens them. To find positive effects of reading on developing students' thinking and on developing students' skills and behaviours, the research covers the following categories:

- students' language level (grammatically correct/incorrect; literary/homelike pronunciation; untidy regional vocabulary/rich and nuanced language);
- linguistic communication ability (inhibition/involvement/inhibition, listener/speaker);
- behaviour during breaks (games, book browsing in the library)
- their complex communication ability

Reading is an activity to which questioned students do not show particular interest, being surpassed by watching TV and leisure time playing with friends. If they were to choose between reading a book and watching the movie, 72.4% would watch the movie, arguing that they would learn much faster and in a shorter time the action, and character typology, only

23% of them would read the book even if it takes longer and 4.6% don't know what to choose.

So we can say that the image has a strong impact on the young reader, the movie facilitating the meeting with the characters that come to life, the characters are contoured much easier on the screen, while through reading, the student must make a significantly higher conscious effort to translate/imagine characters.

Regarding reading preferences, there is 68.3% availability of pupils for stories, to the detriment of lyrical text (11.9%), which is considered difficult, hard to understand, with hidden message, or other literary texts.

Following this survey we observed that pupils are more excited about activities using modern teaching methods, almost all pupils were pleased with the work performed, only two pupils were reluctant, justifying it by uncertainty, lack of confidence and the desire not to get out of their own shell, from their own pace.

Educational games make children happy and thereby they develop courage, attention, desire to relate to the group they belong to. Educational game can be successfully used in capturing the attention of children, a game well prepared and organized being a tool for knowledge and familiarization of the pupil with the environment, or to strengthen knowledge and implementing feed-back.

If at first the students were not as interested in individual study through reading, after the experimental period it is observed that most of the pupils switched over to reading.

Students understood that reading is primarily a means of communication between the author and the reader. Any intellectual activity should be based objectively on information obtained calling for reading, to elements of the written culture. By reading man tries to capture and decipher a message that, as in any communication system, means determining a sense, a meaning. Finally it was found that 91% of the pupils realize the importance of reading, both in terms of cognitive aspects, reading helping them to enrich knowledge about the world, about reality and in terms of education, reading greatly contributing to educate ethically and aesthetically children and in terms of formative aspect of reading which results in shaping and consolidating intellectual work habits, development of thinking, of imagination, of accurate and expressive capacity of expression.

It is good that pupils have realized that they do not read because it is required in school, or because mother says so, they realized that in order to develop their intellectual capacities they need information that they cannot assimilate only from the information received in school or from the media, as they are insufficient, but to supplement them they need individual reading.

Reading books is a fundamental activity to maintain intellectual condition, to enhance knowledge and language, to indirectly knowing different universes and realities. More than any of the audio-visual techniques that circulate cultural values, the book offers its reader, besides the satisfaction brought by any novelty, unique opportunities for reflection, meditation.

The family has a great responsibility in educating children. The time the pupil spends in the family is much more than the time spent at school. Family members become role-models imitated by the little pupil in terms of language, posture, tastes, behaviour. It is desirable, therefore, that parents become an integral part of the educational process. It is desirable that family members discuss about the books read, of course this can only be done in unison. It is necessary for the other members of the family to read too.

Colleagues or friends can be good dialogue partners, especially if they are of the same age and have the same goals. Discussions on a book read can lead to explanation, clarification of ideas, thoughts, but can also create contradictory discussions.

Any debate on a common topic, the more the subject of a book, is a good opportunity for intellectual development.

Discussions with teachers are usually done in the institutionalized environment, where there are certain requirements, here being usually discussed books that have been recommended in the additional mandatory reference list.

Family environment can determine school maladjustment and poor performance in school, and a weaker observance of moral, ethical values transmitted through studied readings. It is necessary to increase awareness of parents, of the persons responsible for the fate of children, on the important role books have in their lives. Using as often as possible awareness, accountability questionnaires for parents in Parent-teacher meetings, in reading meetups and in other activities with parents and students can only help to a better perception of the important role of reading, to a family environment favourable to the development of the taste for reading.

As they grow, children are able to acquire an increasing number of rules. Therefore, the 9 year old students achieve to acquire a smaller number of rules, the 10 years old students achieve to acquire more moral rules than the 9 years old ones, which shows an increase in the number of learned rules.

We can observe that depending on age particularities, on the family background and on intellectual abilities of each pupil, literary reading sensitizes them, making them follow the positive examples provided by the characters in the text, thus helping them to learn easier and faster moral and ethical rules transmitted by them.

As competent moral valences can be designed and implemented, they can achieve the goal only if the subject has a positive attitude towards rules, while indifference or negative attitude can reduce to zero the value of any educational endeavour. Through proper planning of students' reading we can give it a practical-applicative nature explained by the similarity with the presented characters.

### **Findings and conclusions**

Reading is fundamental in intellectual work techniques. It was and remains the main way to enter the area of knowledge. The central problem is that of determining the significance, as the man tries to capture and decipher a message by reading. Message reception leads to a process of updating the old knowledge, but also new associations, and possibly the discovery of new truths.

Reading should not be under threat or in view of a grade, reading must be educated or more precisely, must be an active component of education. The problem of reading is especially of students who have not been educated by their parents in this direction, because, perhaps, parents have ignored this aspect, because they do not read, because there were not concerned to make a small collection of books for their child or because they have a very negative attitude towards reading.

By reading the student has access to a new, inspiring, stimulating, challenging world. The access is provided, in fact, by the pupil's habit to ask (himself/herself) questions awaiting for answers. Of all the questions the most interesting is the question, more precisely the kind of questioning over the reader's self, on the intellectual and physical possibilities, on social status and social role, on creativity, relations with others, etc. Reading is therefore more than reading, it is decoding not only the text itself, but also the reader's deeper self.

The questions raised based on the text develop self-knowledge and self-reflection. Because this type of knowledge is not a process that ends with adolescence or youth, or reading should not be associated only with school cycle, but it must be permanent.

In conclusion, the educational goal is to train students to love reading, to be passionate about reading. Only by awakening the interest in reading, the students will experience a

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permanent attraction for reading books, for broadening their knowledge and culture horizon. The entire development of students in school and in life depends on the extent to which we know to use this intellectual activity tool as a form of self-training and self-education.

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