

## DEVELOPING A CULTURE OF READING AMONG PRIMARY SCHOOL STUDENTS

*Pishaddinova Shaxnoza Baxitbay kizi*

*Student at Nukus State Pedagogical Institute*

**Annotation:** This article explores the importance of cultivating a culture of reading among primary school students and examines strategies that effectively promote reading habits at an early age. Reading plays a vital role in cognitive development, language acquisition, emotional intelligence, and academic success. The study focuses on the integration of reading activities into the classroom environment, teacher practices, parental involvement, and the use of creative and motivational tools to encourage young learners to engage with books regularly. Through classroom observations, teacher interviews, and student surveys, the study identifies both the challenges and opportunities in fostering a lasting reading culture.

**Key words:** reading culture, primary education, literacy development, motivation to read, reading habits, children's literature.

### INTRODUCTION

It should be noted that in primary grades there is no special state document - a curriculum, which is distributed by academic year and determines the content and scope of knowledge, skills and competencies that students should master. We had to develop such a program, but it could be the result of a successful solution to the general task - to identify and substantiate the scientific and methodological foundations of the training course. In other words, we need to describe the significant components of the complex intended for studying book reading as a method of knowledge and reality transformation acquired by a growing and developing person, and to provide the originality of the planned educational activity, the starting point for reflection and analysis should be the book.

Reading is the foundation of education, playing a critical role in a child's intellectual, emotional, and social development. In primary school, the habits and attitudes formed toward reading can influence a student's lifelong relationship with learning. A strong culture of reading not only supports language development and comprehension skills but also fosters imagination, critical thinking, and empathy. Despite the availability of reading materials, many students still lack the motivation or opportunity to read beyond the classroom. This article investigates the ways in which schools, teachers, and families can collaboratively build a sustainable reading culture among primary school students, emphasizing both the psychological and practical aspects of reading promotion.

### METHODOLOGY

A qualitative case study approach was employed to examine reading culture development in three primary schools in Uzbekistan. Data collection methods included classroom observations, interviews with 12 teachers, and surveys of 90 students from grades 1 to 4. Teachers shared their experiences and strategies for encouraging reading in and outside the classroom, such as reading corners, storytelling sessions, and book clubs. Observations focused on students' engagement during reading activities, while student surveys gathered data on reading frequency, preferences, and

perceptions of reading. The role of school libraries and parental support was also examined through supplementary interviews with librarians and parents.

The study of works dedicated to books and readers allows us to emphasize that among the objects included in the educational activities of primary school students, the book represents the most complex phenomenon. Due to its complexity, the "book" still does not have a single interpretation. As the French writer, literary critic, and sociologist Robert Escarpi noted: "Like all living things, a book does not fit into the strict boundaries of definitions". No one has yet been able to give it a clear and stable definition. Book critics distinguish the following most commonly used definitions related to the concept of "book":

A book is a means of communication between people, a tool of mass information.

A book is a synonym for a literary work, a product of authorship.

A book is a publication - a product of publishing - printing activities.

A book is a special form of publication, different from newspapers, magazines, booklets, albums, etc. A book is a form of a certain constructive organization of pages...

A book is a form of organization of a written message.

## RESULTS

The findings revealed that students who were regularly exposed to reading activities showed higher enthusiasm, vocabulary range, and comprehension skills compared to those with limited reading exposure. Teachers who created interactive reading environments such as organizing book-themed events, drama based on stories, and reading competitions reported increased motivation among students. The presence of visually attractive reading corners and access to age-appropriate books played a significant role in promoting independent reading. Moreover, students with active parental support (e.g., bedtime reading, library visits) were more likely to view reading as an enjoyable and meaningful activity. However, challenges such as lack of diverse reading materials, time constraints, and low parental involvement were also identified as obstacles to cultivating a strong reading culture.

What is the main meaning of a book for the educator who forms the reader and for students who learn the art of independent reading? To address this question, we turned to definitions of the book from the perspective of its social significance. One of such concise definitions is given by A. Gersen: "...experience expressed in writing and made available to the general public is a book." We also find such definitions in the definitions of many other great scholars of the past and present who have paid attention to the book: "interlocutor", "mentor", "torch", "teacher", "friend", "priceless heritage", "the world seen through man", "history of peoples", "experience of the past", "heritage of the human mind", "vessel of thought", "the great miracle discovered by man" - these and similar images, acquired from childhood, arouse a sense of pride in the person who discovered the book, and give rise to a sense of respect for the book as for an object that is necessary for us and serves as a place of storage and a means of conveying the experience accumulated by mankind.

The historical experience of mankind and the mental abilities formed in it are realized not only in the book, but also in "every object created by man - from a homemade weapon to a modern electronic computer." In this sense, the book is no exception, it is also "the process of realizing an idea." But social experience and individual thought are realized in the book twice: first - in the

creation of a manuscript - in language, in words, when the writer has an acute need to make his idea the property of a wide circle of people; second - in a specially designed object, in a way that conveys the author's idea in a purposeful and direct way and is intended to organize some kind of written message addressed to all of us.

But in the "man - book" system, we are interested not in the author and publishers, but in the reader, in which the reader is the initiator - a junior schoolchild. When reading a given text independently, the book serves as a reference, and in order to grasp the ideas conveyed by the assignment and the uniqueness of the text's imagery, it is necessary to correctly interpret their system.

## DISCUSSION

The study emphasizes that fostering a reading culture requires deliberate, sustained efforts from all stakeholders involved in a child's education. Teachers must act as reading role models, displaying enthusiasm and integrating literature across the curriculum. Creating a positive reading environment where children can choose what to read, share their thoughts, and associate reading with enjoyment is essential. The integration of modern tools such as e-books and reading apps can also support engagement in today's digital age. However, building a reading culture is not the sole responsibility of schools; families must also take an active role by dedicating time and space for reading at home. Addressing barriers such as limited access to books and insufficient reading time in the curriculum requires systemic solutions and policy support.

In the task of independently referring to books and reading the text, which requires attention, the author's thoughts are also hidden from the reader inside the book, as in a fairy tale - "behind seven locks", and without someone's help, the text can only be perceived by the reader by observing the book as the writers intended.

An analysis of traditional methods has shown that the following methods are effective in developing reading skills in primary grades:

- Reading aloud;
- Role-playing and dramatizations;
- Oral narration of the content of the book;
- Drawing and creative tasks.

As a result of the analysis of modern approaches, the following innovative methods were identified:

- Use of interactive books and electronic resources;
- Organization of book clubs;
- Use of multimedia technologies;
- Holding reading competitions through social networks.

The cooperation between family, school, and society is important in shaping a reading culture. A comprehensive approach can be achieved by creating reading traditions in the family, organizing interesting reading events at school, and creating an environment that supports reading in society.

One of the effective methods identified as a result of studying foreign experience is to increase motivation for reading. Research by Guthrie and colleagues shows that motivation can be significantly increased by selecting books based on students' interests, teaching them to make independent choices, and linking the reading process with interesting games.

The role of primary school teachers in the formation of a reading culture is of particular importance. Teachers should act not only as educators, but also as people who instill a love for books. For this, it is important for teachers themselves to constantly read and learn, to get acquainted with modern literature. The teacher can show students the importance of reading books through their personal example. The class library plays a great role in the formation of a reading culture in primary schools. In each class, it is necessary to create a collection of books appropriate to the age and interests of students, and to regularly update them. In this, it is possible to involve students themselves and enrich the class library with the books they bring. This increases the students' sense of responsibility for books and forms a culture of book sharing.

### CONCLUSION

To conclude, developing a culture of reading among primary school students is a key educational priority that influences their academic and personal growth. A rich and supportive reading environment, both at school and at home, nurtures positive attitudes toward books and strengthens literacy skills. Teachers, parents, and communities must collaborate to ensure that reading becomes a daily and joyful experience for children. With consistent strategies, creative methods, and adequate resources, a lifelong love for reading can be effectively cultivated from the earliest years of schooling.

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