



CURRENT ISSUES IN THE FIELD OF LANGUAGE AND LITERARY EDUCATION: DECLINING INTEREST IN READING

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ABSTRACT

In this article we explore the crucial topic of fostering effective reading culture amidst the backdrop of declining reading habits globally. The paper emphasizes the indispensable role of reading in personal development, academic success, and societal advancement. Drawing on insights from renowned authors, educators, and leaders, the article underscores the urgency of cultivating a habit of reading from an early age and provides actionable steps to overcome barriers to reading engagement. Additionally, it highlights the transformative power of modern tools and technologies in promoting reading accessibility, causes of declining and offers valuable recommendations for creating conducive reading environments.

Keywords: Reading culture, effective reading, literacy, education, personal development, modern tools, societal advancement, cognitive abilities, lifelong learning, socio-economic development.

INTRODUCTION

Language and literary education has traditionally played a central role in developing learners' cognitive, cultural, and communicative capacities. Reading, as a key component of this field, not only improves linguistic competence but also fosters critical thinking, imagination, and empathy. Reading has a wide range of benefits for literacy, employment, and health as well as promoting cultural understanding. However, in recent years, educators and researchers have raised concerns about a noticeable decline in students' interest in reading. This issue has significant implications for both language acquisition and the preservation of literary culture.

Causes of declining interest in reading. It could be due to various causes, each affecting the spending of time during leisure hours as well as information assimilation.

One of the primary reasons for the reduced interest in reading is the rapid advancement of digital technologies. Young people today spend a considerable amount of time on social media, video games, and streaming platforms, which often provide instant entertainment with minimal cognitive effort. It becomes quite easy to consume such contents as one gains easy access to streaming services, social media, and video games. These often make their way to highly attractive visually interactive entertainments for humans, and often do not ask for a huge level of concentration or have longer time spans to grasp them compared to reading, for example. Compared to these activities, reading a book may appear demanding and time-consuming.

The next, modern life pressures also make reading culture decline. Many people are living busier lives in this current world, coupled with works, schools, and so many more engagements, leaving very little time and would easily prefer quicker alternatives for their relaxation. Reading demands much time and attention and seems like a luxury in their busy lives to most people.

Another contributing factor is the shift in educational practices. In many classrooms, reading is presented as an obligatory task rather than an enjoyable activity. Excessive emphasis on examinations, analysis, and technical comprehension sometimes discourages learners from experiencing the pleasure of reading literature. Furthermore, the limited availability of modern, diverse, and relatable reading materials can alienate students who fail to see their own identities and experiences reflected in traditional texts.

Parental influence and home environment also play a crucial role. In households where reading is not modeled or encouraged, children may not develop strong reading habits. Additionally, economic challenges may limit access to books, libraries, or other literary resources, further deepening the gap.

Consequences for language and literary education. The decline in reading habits has multiple negative consequences for language education. First, reduced exposure to reading materials limits vocabulary growth and weakens learners' grasp of grammar and discourse structures. Students who read less often struggle with academic writing, comprehension, and critical analysis.

ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION

From a literary perspective, declining interest in reading poses a threat to cultural continuity. Literature functions as a repository of cultural memory and moral imagination. If students disengage from reading, they lose the opportunity to encounter diverse perspectives, historical narratives, and ethical reflections embedded in literary texts. Over time, this could lead to a diminished appreciation of national and world literary heritage.

Moreover, the decline in reading undermines the development of higher-order thinking skills. Reading complex texts requires concentration, reflection, and interpretation skills that are increasingly at risk in the age of instant digital consumption.

Lack of reading role models. Children and young adults are more likely to read when they have positive reading role models in their lives. In today's fast-paced world, parents and educators may not prioritize reading themselves, inadvertently sending the message that reading is less important.

Curriculum Emphasis. The educational system's focus on standardized testing and exam-driven curricula often leaves little room for reading for pleasure. Students may come to view reading as a chore rather than a source of enjoyment.

Limited Access to Diverse Books: Access to a variety of books can play a pivotal role in nurturing a reading habit. Students who don't have easy access to libraries or bookstores with diverse reading materials may struggle to find books that pique their interest.

POSSIBLE SOLUTIONS

Addressing this issue requires a multifaceted approach. Schools should prioritize cultivating a love for reading rather than treating it merely as an academic

requirement. Incorporating modern, age-appropriate, and culturally diverse texts can help learners connect literature to their own lives. Integrating technology positively--for example, through e-books, interactive reading apps, or online book clubs--can also engage students in ways that match their digital lifestyles.

Teachers and parents must work together to model reading habits. Encouraging shared reading activities at home, creating cozy reading spaces, and discussing books with enthusiasm can help build a positive culture of reading. Public libraries and community programs also have an important role in providing access to books and fostering reading communities.

CONCLUSION

The declining interest in reading is a pressing issue in the field of language and literary education. While digital distractions, educational practices, and social factors have contributed to this trend, the consequences for linguistic, cultural, and intellectual development are profound. To counteract this decline, educators, parents, and policymakers must collaborate to promote reading as both a pleasurable and essential activity. Strengthening reading culture is not only an educational priority but also a vital step toward preserving the richness of language and literature for future generations.

To reignite the joy of reading among students, it is crucial for parents, educators, and society as a whole to address these challenges and promote a culture of reading as a rewarding and enriching activity.

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