

Advancing the quality of life of Mapuche children in rural contexts: the main challenges and needs

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INTRODUCTION

One of the main challenges in rural and urban communities where I have worked as a teacher is the lack of trust in the education system. Education as such can be a tool to bring about social mobility in low-income families.

The poor performance in general among the economically needy sectors accounts for an overwhelming reality especially with regard to the very low levels of reading comprehension. Studies show that three out of every five Chileans do not understand what they read.

‘Chilean primary and secondary education has not changed much in the last 40 years, at least in terms of its ability to prepare students to understand what they read and perform basic arithmetic operations in everyday life’.¹

There is an urgent need to improve in this area given that most school learning goes through the interpretation of texts and is related to the success or failure of students. Therefore it is important to generate work proposals to help promote reading and allow the increase of the capacity of interpretation of texts or simply raise within the families the importance of participating in helping their children improve in the educational process.

THE METHODOLOGY

What is proposed is an innovative project to install at school a reading methodology with students from the 1st through the 6th grades.

The work consists of applying permanent reading speed measurements with its own record in a computer system that yields the corresponding graph to present data to the various classes and check the corresponding intervention. This is projected by conducting Olympics including reading speed and involving the educational community of parents, grandparents, uncles, etc. Those involved will receive rewards or incentives ranging from distinctions in honor rolls to awards or gifts, surprise prizes, etc. Parents and guardians, companies, among others, will fund this monetarily.

The measurement takes place in a stage of training or installation of educational practice so to be able to set with simultaneous standards at school highlighting the best student of the day, week, month.

Audiovisual media can be used such as headsets, microphones, voice recorders, cameras power-point presentations with interesting, relevant and illustrative content corresponding to each level. By registering voice (audio and video), each measurement and counting of words read in a minute can be reviewed by the student or participant. Registration, finding errors and appreciating the performance in terms of reading fluency is assessed. The assessment yardsticks are intonation, pauses and emphasis. They speak with a level of comprehensibility so they can assess themselves and attempt to correct any mistakes in the trained speech recognition (like what was the subject of error), thereby producing a transition from the mistake to recognition and correction of words.

The children's performance table is presented as an Excel file and they can register their names and RUT (their national identification number). The recording of the quantity and quality will be made by the fellow who listens and appreciates it while reading too, and completing the work set by the teacher to meet the objectives of each session.

In pairs, students count the words of the texts offered to be read for a minute, then take turns and mutually register the mistakes that were deducted and appreciate reading fluency. This strategy may take up to 20 minutes at least, once a day, three times a week. Selecting relevant content readings are used for each learning group.

Records of a semester average form the basis to create a database on types of texts read with their respective quantities and qualities of reading speed recorded (first measurement) from which the average is obtained. With that information the level of the reader domain is established and shall be sampled by the teacher in charge of the measurement, with which a second measurement (official measurement) will be established and both figures averaged to project the progress that it seeks to impose on the student or the different levels of average progress that can be achieved.

At each level of advancement it can offer different incentives, mainly in marks or percentages of the final reading speed and fluency, or rewarding progress in the number of words from the values established in the initial average.

Every 5, 10, 15 or 20 words progress is a breakthrough in terms of average speed for each month and the progress between each section of the five levels selected for the case of reading fluency. The 'progressing' ones are rewarded and the stragglers who have a greater chance of improvement compete amongst themselves.

The idea of innovation itself is to create in students the need to read daily, to install reader competition domain allowing the development of materials that are relevant to the curricular progression of each sector and, as far as possible, involve parents and family in general, providing a clear and simple way to track their children's school progress.

It is in this vein that I raise my innovation, we must also consider that the installation of this reading competency must find another strategy that parallelly recognizes the value of orality that students practice in their native language and represents an invaluable cultural value which is the ground for future innovative projects.

The revised teaching models should know the following:

The model considers reading skills and writing skills as complex, consisting of a series of sub-skills that can be clearly identified and arranged in a learning sequence. These skills and sub-skills must be learned from a systematic and gradual education teacher, who plays a leadership role in the learning process of their students. This model is particularly based on behavioral psychology:

The holistic model considers the four modes: listening, speaking, reading and writing, part of the language and therefore are a common feature of communication of meaning and enrich each other as they develop and practice. Then they are cognitive schemata, i. e., knowledge of the world and language influencers for the auditor / reader to interpret the sender's message and also the speaker / writer who produced the message. They can make predictions or anticipations to the text thanks to these cognitive schemata. This model considers that children gradually dominate the various forms of language through its extensive and permanent functional use in natural and meaningful contexts. This model integrates contributions of psycholinguistics and discourse theory:

HOW DOES COGNITIVE SCHEMATA MEASURED IN EVALUATIONS REPRESENT THE MATERIAL REALITY AND HOW ARE THEY LINKED TO THE SPIRITUAL REALITY OF THE CHILD'S COMMUNITY?

Among other causes, my choice for this issue is the conflict between the results shown by measurements in terms of reading comprehension and expressions of a popular will that have supported and frequently sustained student movements and their demands nourished by a collective inference not reflected in those measurements. It is necessary to take measures to enhance the development of the reading literacy domain. Or perhaps the problem is that the proposed content to be evaluated has no co-relation with the expectations, needs and tastes evaluated.

We have set an educational practice that allows the reader to stimulate the development of reading literacy domain in basic education students, starting a diagnosis repeated year after year in the fields of labor, rural and urban, where I work.

1. Barbara Eyzaguirre, Carmen Le Foulon and Ximena Hinzpeter K, "Los chilenos no entendemos lo que leemos", Revista Creces, April 2001.

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