RESEARCH TOPIC

Raising motivation for reading of struggling readers in high-poverty Irish primary schools

Literacy and social justice are inseparable concepts. Access to literacy has historically been a way to reinforce, or mitigate, inequity in societies stratified by race, geography, and socio-economic factors. A large body of evidence indicates that socio-economic status is closely related to how efficiently children learn to read and write (Mol & Neuman, 2014; Hoff, 2013; Snow, Burns, & Griffin, 1998). Low levels of achievement in literacy for children experiencing social and economic disadvantage have been a particular concern for educators and policy makers in Ireland over recent decades with children in disadvantaged schools often struggling with achieving even the basic skills of reading (DES, 2005, Eurydice, 2011). Research in underachievement in literacy has indicated that if struggling readers repeatedly experience failure in acquiring even the basic reading skills, they become poorly motivated to read (Aunola et al, 2002; Chapman, Turner, & Prochnow, 2000).

This paper reports on some of the findings of research into the effects of Fluency Oriented Reading Instruction (FORI) on the motivation for reading among struggling readers in urban, disadvantaged primary schools in Dublin, Ireland. The research was based on on-site reading interventions conducted in learning support classrooms in three primary schools in Dublin over a twelve week period. The study draws on the theoretical perspective of multiple goals in motivation (Pintrich, 2000) and focuses on the research of Guthrie, Coddington and Wigfield (2009) and Wigfield et al. (1996), who determine that reading orientation, perceived reading difficulty and self-efficacy in reading are fundamental constructs in examining reading motivation in young students.

The study was conducted through a pragmatic lens with research questions framed to shed light on the underachievement in literacy of students in First Class from disadvantaged backgrounds. A mixed methods concurrent triangulation strategy was adopted for the study to gather data from teachers (both class teachers and learning support teachers), students and their parents. In this triangulation approach both quantitative and qualitative data were collected concurrently providing cross-validation and an opportunity to determine if there was convergence, differences or a combination of both in the data (Creswell, 2009). The use of two discrete but complementary classifications of mixed methods approaches for the research facilitated alignment between the epistemological, ontological and research approaches of the study. This facilitated the exploration of multiple research questions using questionnaires and semi-structured interviews with teachers and parents and conversational interviews and surveys with students.
About Marino Institute of Education

Marino Institute of Education (MIE) is a Dublin-based teaching, learning and research community committed to promoting inclusion and excellence in education. It has a long and proud involvement with education, specifically initial teacher education (ITE), dating back over 100 years.

MIE’s academic programmes are validated, quality assured and accredited by Trinity College Dublin, the University of Dublin. MIE is an Associated College of Trinity, and this relationship has deepened through the development of a joint academic strategy to promote closer and more extensive collaborations in teaching and research, including joint activities between the two institutes. Through the implementation of this joint academic strategy the strengths of Trinity will be leveraged with those of MIE, to enhance existing relationships and promote new synergies.

In the last decade, the academic mission and scope of MIE’s activity has been re-envisioned to encompass a deeper understanding of education in and beyond the classroom, to incorporate the continuum of teacher education and the education of specialist education practitioners at early years, primary and further education levels. This is allied with a commitment to education studies encompassing non-traditional education settings and the wider education environment in a pluralist context.

MIE’s Mission

MIE is a teaching, learning and research community committed to promoting inclusion and excellence in education. The dignity and potential of each person are central to our life, work and service.

MIE’s Vision

MIE will be a centre of global consequence, in teaching and research in the field of education. Through collaboration and technology, it will extend its geographic boundaries and create momentum for the delivery of new, high quality, innovative programmes in education. MIE will build critical mass for world class research in partnership with others, and will foster university-school-community links that contribute to sustainable improvement and renewal across the entire education system.

MIE will extend its commitment and expertise in the area of inclusion by continuing to conduct research and providing education programmes to empower the socially disadvantaged. MIE will lead national and international dialogue regarding the opportunities and challenges pertaining to pluralism and diversity in education settings.