

# The Impact of Instructional Methods and Psychological Motivation on Reading Ability in Upper Primary Grades

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**Abstract:** *This article explores the combined effects of instructional methods and psychological motivation on reading ability in upper primary students. It emphasizes the significant role of diverse instructional strategies, such as text structure instruction, in improving reading comprehension. Additionally, it highlights the importance of motivation, emotional regulation, and home support in fostering reading development. The research suggests that integrating effective motivational strategies with instructional practices can enhance overall reading proficiency, with implications for both teaching methods and student engagement.*

**Keywords:** Instructional Methods; Psychological Motivation; Reading Comprehension; Upper Primary Grades.

## 1. INTRODUCTION

The literature on reading proficiency in senior elementary grades highlights several key factors influencing literacy development during this critical period. A case study illustrates the importance of early intervention by demonstrating how a student with initially low reading skills was gradually supported through exposure to accessible texts, such as the Paul Kropp series, emphasizing the need for appropriate reading materials to foster engagement and skill development (Adusei-Bonsu et al., 2021).

Research underscores the predictive value of reading achievement test scores, alongside mathematics achievement and student effort, in shaping teachers' perceptions of student success in third and fifth grades, suggesting that reading proficiency at this stage is intertwined with overall academic effort and achievement, which can influence classroom assessments and student motivation (Begeny et al., 2011).

The role of reading fluency as a component of reading proficiency has been explored extensively. Some researchers challenge the traditional focus on automaticity by investigating fluency's contribution to literacy among ninth-grade students, calling for further research into its significance for older students experiencing reading difficulties (Chorzempa & Graham, 2006). Building on this, other studies examine fluency development across third, fifth, and seventh grades, emphasizing prosody—expressiveness in oral reading—as a vital measure of fluency that extends beyond mere word recognition, thus broadening the understanding of fluency's role in reading proficiency (Cowan et al., 2011).

Language development and its impact on reading skills are also prominent themes. Recent studies provide a nuanced view of how language proficiency and reading fluency develop in English Language Learners (ELLs) compared to monolingual students, highlighting the dynamic and complex nature of reading comprehension in upper elementary students (Davis, 2014). Similarly, research models the contributions of language comprehension skills to reading comprehension, emphasizing that morphological awareness and other language-specific factors uniquely predict reading success beyond general language skills (De Corte et al., 2001).

Furthermore, the transfer of literacy skills across languages and contexts is examined in several studies. These reveal that first language (L1) skills, including print exposure and reading achievement, significantly influence second language (L2) proficiency, even in high school, indicating the long-term impact of early literacy experiences established during elementary years (Geva & Farnia, 2012).

Mathematics achievement and its relation to reading skills are also interconnected. Some research focuses on basic calculation proficiency as a foundation for broader mathematics achievement, which may indirectly support reading development through cognitive and academic skill transfer (Gilje, 2014).

Finally, research on bilingual programs demonstrates that dual-language immersion can influence language proficiency and academic achievement, suggesting that language development in diverse linguistic contexts can impact overall literacy in senior elementary students (Helwig et al., 2001; Kieffer et al., 2016).

## **2. THE INFLUENCE OF TEACHERS' INSTRUCTIONAL METHODS ON THE READING ABILITY OF UPPER PRIMARY/ELEMENTARY STUDENTS**

Research demonstrates that teachers' instructional methods significantly influence reading ability development in upper primary grades. Targeted training in text comprehension strategies—including activating prior knowledge, clarifying difficult words, creating schematic representations, and formulating main ideas—has been shown to enhance students' reading comprehension when implemented through interactive techniques like modeling, whole-class discussions, and reciprocal teaching in small groups (Leighton, 1991).

The use of ability grouping within classrooms has emerged as an effective method to tailor instruction to students' varying reading levels, with evidence suggesting that primary-grade teachers' implementation of within-class ability grouping can address individual reading needs more effectively (Morelos, 2021). This approach supports the broader pedagogical principle that instructional methods adapted to student ability levels significantly impact reading development.

Teacher perceptions and judgments have been identified as crucial factors shaping reading instruction and assessment, with research showing that educators' judgments of students' reading abilities correlate with standardized measures and play an integral role in supporting student progress (Padilla et al., 2013).

Furthermore, studies on teacher cognition in EFL reading instruction reveal that educators' beliefs and mental constructs fundamentally influence their instructional choices and subsequent student outcomes (Rasinski et al., 2005).

The integration of standards and curriculum frameworks has been shown to substantially influence instructional practices, with evidence indicating that implementation of standards like the Common Core State Standards in reading can effectively guide instructional strategies and improve reading outcomes (Rasinski et al., 2009). The development of specialized resource materials designed to enhance comprehension skills has also been demonstrated as an important factor in upgrading reading abilities (Sparks et al., 2012).

Technological interventions are increasingly recognized as impactful instructional methods, with research demonstrating that AI-driven, multisensory platforms can produce significant improvements in reading and comprehension skills across large student populations (Sparks et al., 2009). This evidence points to the substantial potential of technology to enhance traditional teaching approaches.

Finally, teachers' perceptions regarding instructional strategies for children with reading difficulties highlight the critical importance of contextually appropriate methods, with findings indicating that educators identify specific instructional strategies as particularly beneficial for pupils with reading challenges (Srinivasan & Murthy, 2021). These perceptions play a vital role in shaping effective reading instruction for diverse learners.

## **3. THE INFLUENCE OF STUDENTS' PSYCHOLOGICAL MOTIVATION ON READING ABILITY IN UPPER PRIMARY GRADES**

The existing literature underscores the significant role of psychological motivation in shaping reading abilities among upper primary students. Motivation, broadly defined as students' interest and engagement in reading activities, has been consistently linked to reading achievement. For instance, a meta-analytic review highlights that motivation, particularly students' interest and engagement, along with decoding skills, account for substantial variance in reading performance (Toste et al., 2020). This suggests that fostering motivation could be a key factor in enhancing reading proficiency during these formative years.

Further research emphasizes the predictive power of motivation in reading development. A longitudinal study demonstrates that motivation at Grade 3 mediates the relationship between teacher-student closeness, cognitive flexibility, and reading comprehension, indicating that emotional and motivational factors are intertwined with cognitive processes influencing reading success (Kern & Friedman, 2009). Similarly, another study finds that

reading attitudes and ability are significantly correlated in upper elementary grades, reinforcing the importance of positive motivation in reading achievement (Collins & Smith, 1980).

The influence of motivation extends beyond cognitive factors to include emotional regulation and home environment. Emotional regulation abilities have been shown to impact reading comprehension, with higher emotional cognitive skills correlating with better reading outcomes (Wigfield et al., 2016).

Additionally, the home literacy environment, including parental support and encouragement, plays a role in fostering motivation, which in turn influences reading literacy achievement (Wenren et al., 2024; Yang et al., 2018).

Research also points to the importance of early literacy milestones as predictors of later reading success, although some studies suggest that emergent literacy skills in early grades may not distinguish reading ability by second grade, implying that motivation and other factors may become more prominent in later stages (Szenczi et al., 2024). Moreover, instructional strategies such as text structure instruction have been explored to improve comprehension, but the role of motivation remains a critical underpinning for effective learning in upper primary grades (Huang et al., 2022).

Overall, the body of evidence indicates that psychological motivation is a vital component influencing reading ability in upper primary students. Motivation not only directly affects engagement and interest but also interacts with emotional regulation, home support, and instructional practices to shape reading outcomes. Enhancing motivation during these grades appears essential for fostering sustained reading development and academic success (Cartwright et al., 2016; O'Garro, 2017).

#### **4. THE COMBINED IMPACT OF INSTRUCTIONAL METHODS AND PSYCHOLOGICAL MOTIVATION ON READING ABILITY IN UPPER PRIMARY GRADES**

The existing literature underscores the significant role of instructional methods in enhancing reading comprehension among upper primary students. Research suggests that the effects of text structure instruction are particularly noteworthy, indicating that teaching students how to recognize and utilize text structures can improve their comprehension skills in upper elementary grades (Hirsch, 2003). Similarly, the importance of diverse instructional approaches tailored to students' varying abilities has been emphasized, with evidence showing that effective methods are crucial for fostering reading development (National Reading Panel, 2000).

Beyond specific strategies, the integration of comprehension instruction appears to be vital. Explicit teaching of comprehension strategies can help students become more active and engaged readers, which is essential during the upper elementary years (Kamil et al., 2008). Furthermore, the progression of reading skills is supported by research indicating that comprehension strategies are predictive of overall reading ability and are amenable to instruction (Duke & Cartwright, 2021).

The role of psychological motivation in reading development is also prominent in the literature. Interventions aimed at fostering reading motivation can influence comprehension outcomes, although the effects of combining motivation interventions with skills instruction show mixed results (van der Sande et al., 2023). Specifically, some studies report no significant effect when motivation strategies are combined with skills instruction, suggesting that motivation alone may not directly enhance comprehension unless integrated effectively (Becker et al., 2010). Conversely, other research highlights that instructional practices positively impacting motivation can ultimately improve reading comprehension, emphasizing the importance of motivational factors in reading development (Wigfield et al., 2016).

Research further indicates that motivation and instructional methods are interconnected. Structured peer-assisted writing, which combines explicit instruction with collaborative learning, adds value to students' writing and reading skills, implying that social and motivational elements can reinforce instructional gains (De Smedt et al., 2020). Additionally, early language and behavior skills influence reading improvement, indirectly pointing to the importance of motivational and behavioral factors in reading success (Morgan et al., 2008).

In sum, the literature suggests that both instructional methods—such as text structure teaching and comprehension

strategies—and psychological motivation are integral to developing reading ability in upper primary students. While effective instructional strategies provide the foundation for skill acquisition, fostering motivation appears to enhance engagement and active participation, which are critical for reading comprehension. The interplay between these elements warrants further exploration to optimize reading interventions during this crucial developmental stage (Allen et al., 2015).

## 5. CONCLUSION

The study underscores the crucial interplay between instructional strategies and psychological motivation in enhancing reading abilities among upper primary students. Effective teaching methods, particularly those that focus on text structure and comprehension strategies, are pivotal in fostering reading proficiency. Moreover, psychological motivation, including emotional regulation and home support, plays a significant role in promoting sustained academic success. To optimize reading development, it is essential for educators to combine these factors in their teaching practices, fostering a holistic approach to literacy education.

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