

THE METHODOLOGY OF DEVELOPING STUDENTS' COMPETENCE TO COMPLETE PIRLS TASKS THROUGH THE IMPROVEMENT OF READING LITERACY IN PRIMARY SCHOOL

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Annotation. This article explores the issue of developing competencies aligned with the requirements of the PIRLS (Progress in International Reading Literacy Study) assessment system through the enhancement of reading literacy among primary school students. The study analyzes methods for improving students' abilities to comprehend, interpret, search for meaning, and draw conclusions from texts during reading lessons. Furthermore, it highlights the methodological approaches of teachers and the role of interactive reading strategies in preparing students for PIRLS-type tasks.

Keywords: PIRLS, reading literacy, text comprehension, analysis, primary education, reading strategies, competence.

Introduction: In modern education, the main objective is not merely to provide knowledge, but to nurture students as independent thinkers capable of analyzing information and drawing logical conclusions. In this regard, international assessment programs, particularly the PIRLS study, serve as significant tools for evaluating students' reading literacy levels.

The PIRLS assessment framework measures students' abilities to understand texts, identify main ideas, search for meaning, analyze facts, and make logical inferences. Therefore, the proper organization of reading literacy lessons in primary education plays a crucial role in developing these competencies among young learners.

PIRLS (Progress in International Reading Literacy Study) is an international assessment that evaluates the level of reading literacy among primary school students. Conducted every five years, the study aims to identify students' abilities to perceive, comprehend, analyze, interpret, and evaluate information while engaging with texts.

1. Literary texts – These describe events and situations through artistic imagery, requiring students to understand the plot, recognize characters' emotions, and identify the author's main idea.

2. Informational texts – These include facts, data, and analytical ideas, requiring students to locate, compare, and draw conclusions from information.

According to the PIRLS assessment criteria, a student should be able to:

- understand the main idea of a text;

- distinguish specific details;
- identify logical relationships;
- express a personal opinion or attitude.

Thus, reading literacy is not limited to the ability to decode written words; it encompasses the process of searching for meaning within a text, analyzing ideas, and forming one's own perspective. Therefore, the process of preparing students for PIRLS-type tasks must be deeply integrated into the methodology of reading lessons in primary education.

The development of reading literacy is the process of forming conscious, analytical, and logical reading skills in students. In this process, the teacher must take into account several methodological foundations.

Developing Conscious Reading Skills. For students to understand what they read, think critically, and draw conclusions, it is essential to work with the text step by step. During the lesson, the teacher implements the following stages:

1. Pre-reading stage – Stimulating students' interest in the topic and encouraging predictions (for example: "What do you think this text might be about?").
2. Reading and comprehension stage – Students read the text attentively, identify key words and expressions, and determine the main idea.
3. Analytical stage – The teacher uses guiding questions to stimulate critical thinking, such as: "Why did the character act this way?" or "What real-life situation does this remind you of?"
4. Conclusion stage – Students summarize their understanding, analyze the author's message, and express their personal opinions.

Using Interactive Methods. The use of interactive methods in reading lessons ensures active participation and promotes students' critical thinking. The following methods are particularly effective:

- INSERT method – Students mark the text as they read (+ – already knew, – – new information, ? – unclear, ! – interesting).
- K-W-L chart – "Know – Want to know – Learned" structure helps activate and organize prior knowledge.
- Cluster method – By placing a central concept in the middle and branching related ideas, students analyze the structure and meaning of the text.
- Brainstorming and Role-playing – These strategies foster creative thinking and help students analyze situations from the characters' perspectives.

Working with Different Types of Texts. Engaging with various genres of texts broadens students' cognitive and analytical abilities:

- *In literary texts – Students analyze characters' actions and emotions, and interpret their motivations.*
- *In informational texts – Students compare facts, identify cause-and-effect relationships, and draw conclusions.*

- *In dialogic texts – Students examine the content of conversations and compare the viewpoints of different speakers.*

Through these methodological approaches, students progress from understanding content to analyzing and finally evaluating it — which fully aligns with the key competencies measured by the PIRLS assessment framework.

Reading lessons in primary school play a fundamental role in shaping students' thinking abilities. To achieve high results in the PIRLS study, reading lessons should be organized in the following directions:

Organizing the Reading Process on an Analytical Basis. The teacher should guide students not only to read the text, but also to understand the meaning behind it. For example:

- “Who was right in this situation?”
- “What important idea is hidden in the text?”
- “What lesson does the author want us to learn?”

Such questions develop students' analytical and interpretive thinking, encouraging them to look beyond surface-level comprehension.

Applying PIRLS-Type Tasks. Teachers should regularly incorporate PIRLS-style tasks into reading lessons, such as:

- Finding evidence from the text;
- Identifying differences between characters;
- Determining the main idea of the passage;
- Expressing a personal attitude toward the author's viewpoint.

Example task (aligned with PIRLS criteria):

Text: “The boy planted a tree in the garden. He watered and cared for it every day.”

Question: “Why can the boy's actions be considered positive?”

This type of task helps students understand cause-and-effect relationships, analyze moral ideas, and draw logical conclusions — all of which reflect PIRLS assessment competencies.

Developing Critical Thinking Skills. Critical thinking is one of the essential competencies assessed by PIRLS. Through the use of thought-provoking questions, problem situations, and classroom discussions, the teacher helps students justify their opinions, provide evidence, and evaluate alternative viewpoints.

Encouraging such reasoning-based dialogue transforms reading lessons into platforms for reflection, analysis, and argumentation — key dimensions of reading literacy according to international standards.

Conclusion. The development of reading literacy in primary school is not merely about teaching students to read texts, but about shaping them into independent thinkers, analysts, and individuals capable of drawing conclusions.

Organizing reading lessons based on PIRLS criteria and applying corresponding methodological approaches fosters students' ability to engage deeply with texts, enhances their critical thinking, and develops logical analysis skills.

Thus, preparing students for PIRLS tasks through the improvement of reading literacy serves as a key foundation for achieving high results international assessment systems.

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