



IMPROVING SUBJECT-RELATED COMPETENCES IN
PRIMARY GRADE READING LESSONS BASED ON
SYNERGETIC PRINCIPLES

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Abstract. *The article discusses the development of science competencies in primary school reading lessons based on synergistic principles. The content of the synergistic approach is explained in simple language and the possibilities for the student's independent thinking, understanding of the text, oral and written expression of his/her thoughts, analysis of the literary text, and active participation in the reading process are considered. Practical recommendations, sample tasks, and assessment criteria for organizing the lesson as an open, interconnected, and changing system are proposed. The article is based on theoretical analysis and methodological recommendations, and does not claim to contain experimental results.*

Keywords: *primary education, reading lesson, subject-specific competence, synergy, reading literacy, integration, independent thinking, reflection, collaboration, text analysis.*

In today's education, the task of the student is not limited to memorizing information. He must use the knowledge he has learned, ask questions, understand the idea in the text, justify his point of view, and be able to cooperate with other people. Especially elementary school reading lessons are an important area for the formation of these skills. Because through reading, the child learns new words, compares events, evaluates the behavior of characters, and connects the content of the text with his own life experience.



The effectiveness of a reading lesson is not determined solely by fluent and accurate reading. It is important that the student understands what he has read, distinguishes between primary and secondary information, draws conclusions, answers questions about the text, and explains his opinion with evidence. International assessment approaches such as PIRLS also pay special attention to finding specific information from the text, drawing conclusions, interpreting ideas, and evaluating content [1].

A synergetic approach can be a useful theoretical perspective in addressing these challenges. Synergeticism is an approach that examines how different parts interact to produce new patterns and outcomes. When applied to education, it means taking into account the connections between teacher, student, text, classmates, family experience, and learning environment. In this approach, the lesson has a predetermined goal, but the questions, thoughts, and discoveries of the students also influence the learning process.

To explain the theoretical content of improving science competencies in primary school reading lessons based on synergetic principles and to suggest practical ways that teachers can use. The article is of a theoretical and methodological nature; it does not present the results of experiments or measurements that have not been conducted.

1. Subject-specific competencies and learning opportunities

Competence is the ability of a student to apply knowledge, skills, and experience in a specific situation. For example, a child's retelling of the events of a fairy tale demonstrates knowledge and speech skills. When a child explains why the hero acted the way he did, citing evidence from the text, he uses the competence of understanding and analysis. When he comes up with a different ending to the fairy tale, creative thinking also develops. It is not appropriate to teach subject-related competencies in reading lessons in isolation. Fluent reading, vocabulary, text comprehension, expressive reading, oral presentation, and written thinking complement each other. If a student does not know the



meaning of words, it will be difficult for him to understand the text in depth; if he does not understand the content, he will not be able to express a well-founded opinion about the hero. Therefore, it is necessary to develop skills in an interconnected way in the lesson. The main competencies in the reading lesson can be grouped as follows. The first is technical reading competence: reading words correctly, fluently and in an appropriate tone. The second is text comprehension competence: finding the main idea, determining the sequence of events, understanding cause and effect. The third is speech competence: answering a question in full, retelling, clearly expressing one's opinion. The fourth is literary analysis competence: understanding the character of the hero, the author's opinion and the figurative means in the text at an age-appropriate level. The fifth is information processing competence: finding the necessary information from the text, comparing different information. The sixth is social and personal competence: listening, respecting the idea, cooperating and drawing conclusions from what has been read. In developing these competences, the teacher acts not only as a provider of information, but also as an organizer who guides the student to search. The student, on the other hand, turns from a listener who expects a ready-made answer into an active participant who asks questions, guesses, checks and revises his/her own opinion. Such change does not happen completely in one lesson; it is shaped through regular practice, support, and feedback. The synergistic approach encourages us to see learning as a system influenced by many interconnected factors. Even if each student in the class reads the same text, they may understand it differently. This is influenced by their vocabulary, family stories, life experiences, interests, and reading speed. The teacher can view these differences not as shortcomings, but as opportunities for sharing ideas and learning together.

The first principle is interconnectedness. The reading text is studied in connection with the native language, nature, history, art and everyday life. For



example, in a text about nature, students explain new words, compare the information in the text with a picture, and make their own suggestions for protecting nature. Thus, language, knowledge, communication and environmental responsibility come together in one task.

The second principle is openness. During the lesson, students can ask questions, look at the text from a different perspective, and refer to additional sources. Openness does not mean that the teacher works without a plan. On the contrary, the teacher adapts to the interests and responses of students, while maintaining clear goals and criteria.

The third principle is self-organization. In a group assignment, students can divide tasks, agree on who will read the text, who will write down important ideas, and who will present the result. Initially, the teacher provides guidance, and then the children take on more independent responsibilities. This process strengthens cooperation and accountability.

The fourth principle is feedback and reflection. The student receives an explanation for his answer, sees his mistake, and tries to correct it. For example, in response to the thought, "I thought the hero was brave because he helped his friend," the teacher might ask, "Which sentence in the text shows this?" Such a question prompts the child to support his answer with evidence.

The fifth principle is that small changes add up to big results. Taking a little time each lesson to explain new words, find evidence from the text, formulate questions, and test your own ideas will develop a reading culture in the long term. The results may not be visible immediately, but regular and purposeful work is important.

2. Organizing a lesson based on synergistic principles

A three-stage structure is convenient for organizing a lesson: preparation before reading the text, working with the text, and post-reading activities. Each stage is connected to the next. Assumptions and questions are raised before





reading; assumptions are checked during reading; and finally, students draw conclusions and evaluate their own thinking.

In the first stage, the teacher asks students to guess about the story using the text title, picture, or keywords. For example, if the text is called “A Kind Neighbor,” the question is “What actions can show kindness?” The answers are written on the board, but are not immediately judged as correct or incorrect. This method activates students’ previous experience.

In the second stage, the text can be read in parts. After each part, students answer questions such as “What happened?”, “Why did it happen?”, “What might happen next?”. Working in pairs, one student asks a question, the other finds evidence in the text. Then they switch roles. This develops reading, listening, interpreting, and collaboration skills together.

In the third stage, students express the main idea of the text in one sentence, evaluate the character's actions, or suggest a different ending to the story. The teacher deepens the answer with questions such as “Why do you think so?”, “Which sentence confirms your idea?” At the end of the lesson, students answer one of the questions: “What did I understand today?”, “Which question was difficult for me?”, “What will I do better next time?” In the synergistic approach, the level of preparation of students is also taken into account. Tasks of varying complexity can be given based on the same text: some students find specific information from the text, another explains the cause and effect, and another evaluates the character's decision. In this case, all students are directed towards a common goal, but the path to achieving it is adapted to their needs.

The “Guess — Evidence — Conclusion” method helps to understand the text in depth. Before reading, the reader makes a guess based on the title. After reading the text, he finds evidence that confirms or changes his guess. Finally, he states his conclusion. This method allows the child to connect his thoughts with evidence and reconsider his views based on new information.





In the “Heroes’ Council” method, small groups discuss the decisions of a character in a story. One group supports the character’s actions, the second group suggests a different solution, and the third group looks for evidence in the text. The teacher monitors the discussion in a respectful manner. The goal is not to simply label the character as good or bad, but to understand the reasons for his or her actions. In the “Text Map” task, students show the characters, place, time, problem, important events, and ending in a table or diagram. This is especially useful for children who are confused about the sequence of events. Instead of providing a ready-made diagram, students can fill in some of the blanks themselves. Then they can retell the story using the map. In the “One Text — Several Points of View” task, students try to tell the same story from the perspective of different characters. For example, a story about a bird can be told from the perspective of a bird, a boy, or a tree. This task develops the skills of retaining text content, imagining, and understanding the situation of another being or person.

In the “Question Author” method, students formulate their own questions about the text. Questions can be divided into three levels: a question that requires a clear answer from the text; a question that requires reasoning and drawing conclusions; a question that requires a personal attitude and evidence. Students answer their questions in turn. This method encourages questioning skills, careful reading of the text, and substantiation of the answer. In the “Relating the Text to Life” method, students compare the story they read with a situation in everyday life. For example, after a story about friendship, the question “What would you do if your friend needed help?” is asked. The teacher should not force the student to tell personal experiences and should not require the student to disclose family or personal information. Any student who wants to can give an imaginary example. In order for these methods to be effective, they must be selected in accordance with the purpose of the lesson. It is not necessary to use all methods in one lesson. Depending on the content of the



text, the time of the lesson, the age of the students, and the readiness of the class, one or two methods are chosen. The most important aspect is that the task encourages the student to refer back to the text, explain his/her thoughts, and apply his/her knowledge.

Assessment in the development of competencies should not be just a final scoring tool. Assessment should show what the student is doing and what needs to be improved at the next stage. For this purpose, observation during the lesson, short questions, oral answers from the student, text mapping, pair discussion and self-assessment can be used. The following can be taken as simple assessment criteria: reading the text correctly and fluently; identifying the main idea; finding evidence from the text; expressing the idea logically; listening to the opinions of others; drawing conclusions. For each criterion, descriptions such as “did it independently”, “did it with a little help”, “needs additional practice” can be used. This helps to see their individual development rather than comparing children with each other.

It is important for the teacher to provide clear and polite feedback. Instead of saying, “That’s not good,” it is more helpful to say, “You’ve got the main idea, now show me a sentence that supports it.” When mistakes are seen as a natural part of the learning process, the student is less afraid to respond and has the courage to test their ideas.

Individual approach means creating different opportunities for students. A child who is struggling with reading may be given a shorter text, explanations of new words, or extra time. A student who is learning quickly may be offered to compare the hero's decision, write an alternative ending, or evaluate the author's opinion. However, the help should not isolate the student from the group, but rather help him or her participate in the general activity. Family and school cooperation also strengthens reading competencies. Reading books together at home, listening to the child while he or she tells a story, and asking, “Which character did you like and why?” are useful habits. It is important to



take into account that families have different circumstances: not every task requires an expensive book or the Internet, and it should be possible to complete it at school.

When synergistic principles are consistently applied, students are expected to work more actively with the text, get used to asking questions, justify their opinions, and listen to the views of their classmates. The teacher, in turn, is more aware of the differences in the class and has the opportunity to adjust the tasks. These are theoretically and methodologically expected results; their exact level depends on the class, teaching conditions, and the duration of application. In order to draw firm conclusions about effectiveness, observation, initial and final tasks, and analysis of the results should be conducted. Some difficulties may arise in implementing the approach. For example, if the number of students in the class is large, there may not be enough time to hear the opinion of each child. In such a situation, pair discussions, small groups, short written answers, and pre-prepared criteria can help. When time is limited, instead of discussing all the questions, two or three questions that are most relevant to the lesson objective are selected.

Another condition is the methodological preparation of the teacher. A synergistic approach is not just about dividing into groups or playing games. Each activity should serve the purpose of reading, help with understanding the text, and allow the student to check his or her own thinking. After the lesson, the teacher can analyze which tasks were useful, which students need additional help, and what needs to be changed in the next lesson. Also, the synergistic approach should not be overly dependent on technology. Pictures, books, whiteboards, flashcards, oral questions and answers, and group discussions themselves can also enhance interactions. If digital tools are available, they can be used to listen to the text, see new words, or summarize answers, but the main goal is for the student to think and understand the text.





Improving science-related competencies in elementary school reading lessons is not limited to the student reading the text correctly. He must understand what he has read, find important information, draw conclusions, express his opinion fluently, and be able to justify his point of view with evidence. These skills are closely related to each other and require the organization of the lesson as a holistic system.

Synergistic principles help to take into account the interaction of the teacher, the student, the text and the learning environment. Interdependence, openness, self-organization, feedback and reflection turn the lesson into a process in which the student actively participates. In this, the diverse opinions and experiences of students are valued as a source of learning. In practice, methods such as “Assumption - Evidence - Conclusion”, “Hero Council”, “Text Map”, “Question Author” and linking the text to life can be used appropriately. Assessment should not only record the result, but also show the student the next step. Thus, the synergistic approach creates a methodological opportunity to improve reading lessons as a meaningful, collaborative and harmoniously developing educational process of competencies.

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