

A study on developing reading skills of engineering students through WhatsApp as motivational strategy

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Abstract

Reading is a skill that a reader uses to search for knowledge of the world and understanding. Reading brings up the human beings knowledge to know about written statements that are available in various sources. This research has been conducted for first year students of SVS College of Engineering in Coimbatore. Because the present generation students are living in modern society and they are using smart cell phone nowadays. Yet they have not used it for education purpose. So this research makes them to utilize mobile phone to develop their reading skills by using WhatsApp which is being used as one of the most important motivational strategies. WhatsApp is one of the most important social networks to convey or send the message among the students for various reasons. It shows that they are having more interest to use of reading message which is sent by others or those who belong to class. They can develop their reading skills by reading message via WhatsApp which makes them to involve for reading text message and developing their understanding power. The students can share the materials which are related to their subjects or own course from one to one or many by using WhatsApp. When the students are coming to know the intimation of assignment through WhatsApp, they do not forget it as well as they will write it in their examination.

Keywords: Reading skills, Motivation, Social Media, Newspaper and WhatsApp

Introduction

“We were never born to read. Human beings invented reading only a few thousand years ago. And with this invention, we rearranged the very organization of our brain, which in turn expanded the ways we were able to think, which altered the intellectual evolution of our species. (Wolf, 2007:3)”.

The human beings need to communicate with fellow citizen for sharing their own feelings and thoughts and also business because they depend on each other in life. So a language is essential to help them for communicating with people from various places in and out of India. When one is willing to know about any information in the world, he should be familiar of English language as a second language in India. There are four skills in English language such as listening skill, speaking skill, reading skill and writing skill. The study is taken with reading skill of first year engineering college students because in many colleges, students do not have reading habits than other three skills. This study has aimed to develop reading skill of first year EEE students through Newspaper and WhatsApp as motivation strategies in SVS College of Engineering, Coimbatore.

Aim of the paper

1. To increase reading habit of engineering students.
2. To develop reading skills in second language.
3. To apply social media for developing reading skills.
4. To motivate students to read through WhatsApp.
5. To improve level of reading skills in education.

Reading skills

“Reading is a basic life skill. It is a keystone for a student’s success in college, in fact entire life. Without the ability of reading, opportunities for personal fulfilment and job success definitely will be lost.”

Reading is something many of us take for granted. We read with what appears to be little effort and little planning. And it is remarkable that so much of the world’s population can read – a little more than 80 percent of the world’s population can read to some extent (Elley, 2001; Tucker 2000; UNESCO, 2007), They can read basic forms, read advertisements, read newspapers, and use basic reading skills in their work and daily lives when needed. Some percentage of these people can read at a much higher level of comprehension, learning new conceptual information from texts, synthesizing new information from multiple texts, critiquing information in texts, and using their comprehension skills to reinterpret texts (Elley, 1992; Kirsch *et al.*, 2002; NAAL, 2005; NEAP, 2007). Universal literacy is an ideal goal that is an ongoing priority among UNESCO, nation states, and many nongovernmental organizations, and efforts need to be made to reduce illiteracy levels.

A definition of reading

Reading is defined that “Reading is the process of receiving and interpreting information encoded in language form via the medium of print” (Urquhart & Weir, 1998:22), or, “Comprehension occurs when the reader extracts and integrates various information from the text and combines it with what is already known” (Koda, 2005:4).

Academic purpose for reading

1. Reading to search for information (scanning and skimming)
2. Reading for quick understanding (skimming)
3. Reading to learn
4. Reading to integrate information
5. Reading to evaluate, critique, and use information
6. Reading for general comprehension (in many cases, reading for interest or reading to entertain)

Motivation

Motivation is called as internal and external factors that stimulate desire and energy in people to be continually interested and committed to a job, role or subject, or to make an effort to attain a goal.

Motivation results from the interaction of both conscious and unconscious factors such as the intensity of desire or need, incentive or reward value of the goal, and expectations of the individual and of his or her peers.

Intrinsic and Extrinsic Motivation

The instrumental and integrative orientation is not enough to cover all aspects of the term motivation. The term intrinsic and extrinsic motivation was added to the model. The terminus intrinsic is connected with behaviour, which establishes from reward of the activity itself. The learner acts, because he is enjoying the activity or it is satisfying his curiosity. Mainly it is self-determined and the learner is eager to learn a foreign language because he wants to achieve a certain level of competence. The learner enjoys learning and the acquisition of a foreign language is challenging. Extrinsic motivated learners are oriented on external stimuli, e.g. positive feedback or expectation from others. In general four different type of extrinsic motivation can be distinguished (Bahar 2005):

1. External: the learner is only motivated through external stimuli, e.g. exams

2. Interjected: the learner pushes him/herself to achieve the desired goal, e.g.
3. Identified: the value of the learning is recognized and for the own sake fulfilled.
4. Integrated regulation: part of the personality, i.e. to fulfill a need.

Social Media

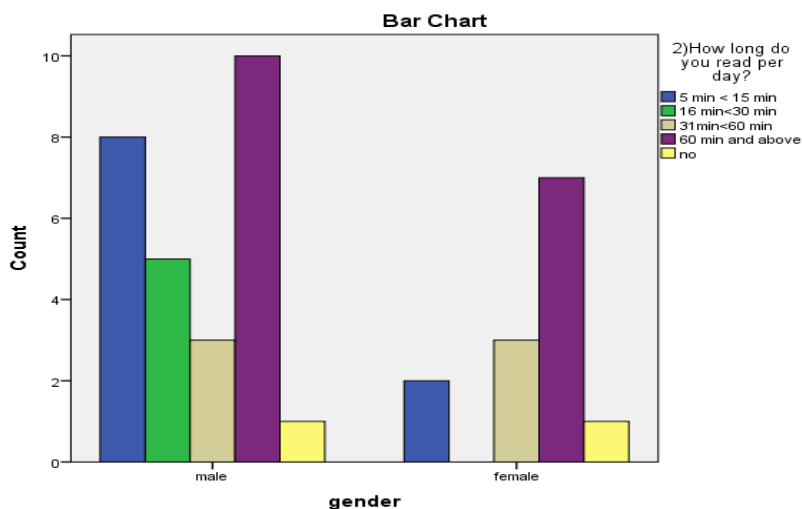
Social media is a tool of online channel to communicate with many people at same time. Social media is used in both personal computer and cellular phone with help of internet connection. Social media is made up with different networking websites and applications such as Facebook, Twitter and WhatsApp which involve the individual to engage in conversation from one to one or many people.

WhatsApp

WhatsApp is one of the widest applications of social media. WhatsApp is founded by CEO Jan Koum and Brian Acton, is located in Mountain View, California, United States in 2009. It is used with internet to send text message, documents, images, video, audio to other users by using standard cellular mobile numbers. Though WhatsApp is having many option and facilities within, text message only has been taken for the present study to investigate reading skills of first year engineering students.

How long do you read per day?

		How long do you read per day?					Total	
		5 min to 15 min	16 min to 30 min	31min to 60 min	60 min and above	no		
Gender	Male	Count	8	5	3	10	1	27
		% within gender	29.6%	18.5%	11.1%	37%	3.7%	100%
	Female	Count	2	0	3	7	1	13
		% within gender	15.4%	0.0%	23.1%	53.8%	7.7%	100.0%
Total		Count	10	5	6	17	2	40
		% within gender	25%	12.5%	15%	42.5%	5%	100%



Interpretation of Data

The data has been collected from 40 students of first year EEE class to check about their habit and how they are interested in reading as well as how long they read per day between boys and girls. Students reading habit might be involved in different activities such as text book, short story, newspaper, social media and any other written materials. The table shows that

29.6% of boys and 15.4% of girls are reading per day from five minutes to fifteen minutes. 18.5% of boys and 0% of girls are reading per day from sixteen minutes to thirty minutes. 11.1% of boys and 23.1% of girls are reading per day from thirty one minutes to sixty minutes. 37% of boys and 53.8% of girls are reading per day from I hour and above one hour. 3.7% of boys and 7.7% of girls are not reading per day.

Research Findings for how long students read per day

1. 25% of students read per day from five minutes to fifteen minutes.
2. 12.5% of students read per day from sixteen minutes to thirty minutes.

3. 15% of students read per day from thirty one minutes to sixty minutes.
4. 42.5% of students read per day for sixty minutes and more than sixty minutes.
5. 5% of students don not read per day for one minute.

Area of interest in Reading

S. No.	Area of interest in Reading				
	Area of interest in Reading	Count	Gender		Total
Male			Female		
1	Text & story books	Count	5	4	9
		% within Area of interest in Reading	55.6%	44.4%	100%
2	Newspapers	Count	9	3	12
		% within Area of interest in Reading	75%	25%	100%
3	Social Media (WhatsApp)	Count	2	5	7
		% within Area of interest in Reading	28.6%	71.4%	100%
4	Others	Count	5	1	6
		% within Area of interest in Reading	83.3%	16.7%	100%
5	No	Count	6	0	6
		% within Area of interest in Reading	100.0%	0.0%	100%
Total		Count	27	13	40
		% within Area of interest in Reading	67.5%	32.5%	100%

Interpretation of Data

The table displays about the students area of interest in reading rating. 55.6% of boys and 44.4% of girls are having interest in reading of text book and short story. 75% of boys and 25% of girls are having interest in reading of newspaper. 28.6% of boys and 71.4% of girls are having interest in reading of social media (WhatsApp). 83% of boys and 16.7% of girls are having interest in reading of others. 100% of boys and 0% of girls are not having interest in reading of anything.

Research Findings for area of interest in reading

1. 22.5% of students are interest reading text and story books.
2. 30% of students are interest reading Newspaper, cinema and sports articles.
3. 17.5% of students are interest reading of technology like WhatsApp.
4. 15% of students are interest reading about others.
5. 15% of students are not having interest in reading.

Purpose of WhatsApp

WhatsApp is being used by students for different purpose and various reasons. The following uses of WhatsApp have been given by the students for

1. It is to gather good information and easy to communicate with friends.
2. They can become skilled at collecting general knowledge.
3. They share their happiness and sorrow with friends or relatives.
4. Somebody is using for time pass.
5. Many students are utilizing it for their education purpose like home work and assignment.
6. They exchange important news like science and study relevant videos.
7. They are motivated by reading adventurous pictures with written quotes.
8. Mainly they can update social issues.
9. Students want to read posters and pictures with quotations.

10. Questions are shared among students through WhatsApp.

How they feel when use WhatsApp for reading purpose

When the students use WhatsApp for reading any text message which is received from any one, they would read the messages eagerly than printed materials. Because they feel happy that it is simple to read fast and reply as soon as they get it. It would be helpful to the students who have absent to class for getting information of regular activities of class.

The following comments used in WhatsApp

Below mentioned commends that are given by the students in class room activities are shared often like single word message or compound words with their friends.

- Awesome
- Nice
- Looking good
- Super
- Wow
- Smiley
- Awesome
- Nice sweetheart
- Chanceless
- Selected images
- Funny
- Very fantastic
- What a news!
- Cool
- Bore

By using these words, the students come to know spelling of each word and they can develop vocabulary skills in English language through help of WhatsApp.

Conclusion

Many of the students want to use WhatsApp for developing reading skills than reading newspaper and others. They like to gather intimation through WhatsApp because they can share notes for class, clearing the doubts with friends, sharing

pictures, messages, news, audio and video clips. When they read printed copy, they would get bore but they do not get bore while reading in WhatsApp. The students of engineering college are very intellectual and think in modern approach as well as they would like to use some technologies to build up their learning method. So that WhatsApp is used in the study as a motivational strategy for developing reading skills among the first year engineering students. It is concluded that most of the students can develop their reading skills by using WhatsApp in education.

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