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Title: The relative contribution of cognitive and motivational variables to secondary school students' reading comprehension skills, taking into account educational tracks

Abstract:

In secondary education students are progressively expected to obtain knowledge from text. Proficient reading comprehension skills are therefore essential. Both motivational (e.g. reading motivation) and cognitive (e.g. reading strategy use) processes are found to contribute to comprehension skills. As to educational practice, also differentiating between educational tracks is paramount in secondary education. However, the relative contribution of motivational and cognitive variables to reading comprehension remains unclear for secondary school students, especially taking into account the different educational tracks (e.g., Taboada, Tonks, Wigfield, Guthrie, 2008). Therefore, the present study aims on the one hand to analyze relationships between reading motivation, reading strategy use, and reading comprehension and on the other hand to analyze differences among these relations across educational tracks (i.e., academic, technical and vocational). A total of 2494 9th grade students from 195 classes in Flanders (Belgium) participated. Students' reading comprehension, reading motivation and reading strategy-use were measured using standardized instruments (B.V. Arnhem, 2013; De Naeghel et al., 2012; Mokhtari & Reichard, 2002). Regression analysis with a three-level design was conducted. Preliminary results indicate that students' autonomous reading motivation is positively related to their reading strategy use and reading comprehension skills and students' reading strategy-use is positively related to their comprehension skills. Furthermore, results indicate significant interaction effects across educational tracks, mainly comparing the academic and vocational track. The results of this study can contribute to a better understanding of the unique contribution of both motivational and cognitive processes related to reading comprehension, which has both theoretical and practical relevance.

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