

Seven proposals for a global policy on reading

1. Involvement of each individual in responsibility and power

The increase in the number of readers comes from an evolution in power sharing and from both collective and individual involvement and responsibility. A community only produces the number of readers that it requires, that is to say people who are capable of feeling, sharing and practising a certain relationship to the world, a behaviour built on distancing and theorising the experience in progress to transform it and understand it.

2. Broad and constant information on the nature and stakes of reading

One does not automatically become a reader but rather by means of a deliberate process which relies on multiple acts of awareness, ranging from the learning process to challenging the non-reader status of the child or adult. This constant effort to inform must be relayed by other means than the written word in order to reach the non-readers wherever they are.

3. Development of short newsletters to circulate new written works

The increase in the number of readers goes through the development of written pieces that differ, in their conception, from the usual references and viewpoints of what is written these days for the relatively small amount of readers. In other words, to involve more readers, the written work must not become easier but must gain in quality by being able to analyse more diversified human experiences. These written pieces will only be able to materialise through the contact of these new readers themselves in a mutual process of discovery, production and exchange where texts, authors and readers emerge for a different look at the world.

4. Other views on existing written pieces and birth of new methods of reading

Developing reading is about encouraging observation, analysis, study and detachment processes towards written pieces themselves rather than working in a zealous fashion as if the reader is a non-believer who needs to be converted. What has to be sought is everyone's implication in the knowledge and understanding of the functioning of the written text as a social object. Reading is neither an escape nor an "entertainment" but the tool that allows appearances to be transgressed.

5. Common training of education partners for common actions

The expansion in the number of readers can come from an array of people such as teachers, parents, librarians, social workers, before and after school club leaders and so on. However, it is impossible for these people to bring their contribution to a reading policy if the opportunity to form a shared theory on common practices is not given to them. Training, as well as research, must be a mechanism that goes alongside new social trends.

6. Equipment sharing between different bodies (schools, libraries, etc.)

Becoming a reader requires access to self-teaching and social written pieces where they exist and in particular in shared equipment. This access needs : effort to put everything on a network ; constant and diverse relaying of written pieces and training in how to utilise the available help. It is only when a cohesive structure is formed from the combined and separate efforts of all areas in society that all the conditions will be fulfilled to develop proper reader status.

7. Use of new technologies to improve reading techniques

Still today, around 70% of people handle written work only in a rudimentary manner. Reading puts into practice complex processes that have nothing in common with this usage. It is therefore essential that sufficient time, money and man-hours be allocated, not only in the early learning stages but also in the later necessary periods of improvement. It is the same thing as far as the production of written pieces and the use of new technologies is concerned which makes publishing a widely collective activity. Progress in reading cannot be separated from progress in general as it is both the cause and the consequence of it.

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