

Learning patterns and reading comprehension in primary education: a mixed methods approach

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Poster

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Abstract

The analysis of learning patterns (Vermunt, 1998) has generated an interesting insight in Higher Education. However, this model has been scarcely analyzed in the field of Primary Education (Martínez-Fernández, et al., 2021). In addition, this line of research has been based almost exclusively on the use of a self-report questionnaire (the Inventory of Learning patterns of Students, ILS). Therefore, in this study we extend the research in this area with a mixed methods approach in the field of Primary Education. Thus, two contributions are oriented to enrich the line of research on learning patterns; on the one hand, Primary Education students who live in a socio-economically vulnerable territory; and on the other hand, we deepen the analysis of learning patterns using the semi-structured interview and the focus group for a joint analysis (meta-reflection) on the results obtained. This paper aims to discuss the contributions of mixed methods to the analysis of learning patterns in relation to reading comprehension as evidence of predictive validity. In this way, we can gain a better understanding of learning processes from the earliest stages of development, based on different points of view (children's and tutors'). A total of 218 primary school students and their tutors (N=3) from 4th, 5th and 6th grades participated. The study was carried out in the periphery of the city of Murcia (Spain) in socially vulnerable areas. Data was obtained from the ILS inventory and interviews with tutors and a focus group with students. This study is part of a larger pretest-posttest design project. However, here we have focused on the analysis of the information provided by the different instruments, and on the role of learning patterns (pretest) in the explanation of reading comprehension (posttest). Patterns of learning are identified from children's self-reported information, like students in Higher Education. However, patterns identified from interviews with tutors were found to be more reliable and correlated with reading comprehension levels. Children with an Undirected pattern have the lowest, even worrying, results. Additionally, the mixed methods approach provides relevant data in understanding learning patterns. We believe that the identification of learning patterns is an excellent tool to provide differentiated learning actions aimed at individual remediation of learning difficulties. In this same sense, we consider that the "remedy" cannot be the same for everyone, nor the same dose, since people are in different learning profiles, and this calls for personalized learning itineraries. Finally, approaching the reality of classrooms, learning processes, and teaching from mixed methods is a potential for educational research and for the design of actions for change that should be encouraged.

Keywords

Learning; Mixed methods; Primary; Reading

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