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Family and classroom contributions to reading promotion: – A comparative intervention study

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Summary

This thesis deals with reading promotion at Grade 4. The development and evaluation of three reading programs with respect to their effectiveness was a primary concern in order to generate relevant insights for school practice. The programs associated both cognitive and motivational objectives in reading promotion. However, the three conditions differed in program intensity: Principles of Self-Determination Theory (Deci & Ryan, 2002) as well as cognitive components of promotion were implemented at different levels. Since family influences reading development before and during school in a significant way (Hurrelmann, 2002), one intervention involved additionally the participation of parents in reading promotion. A total of 940 4th grade students of the German part of Canton Freiburg (Switzerland) participated in the study. The 56 classes were allotted to the three intervention groups as follows: (A) Autonomous reading at school (N = 227), (B) Cooperative reading at school (N = 244), (C) Cooperative reading with parents' participation (N = 225). 230 parents participated in the condition C. Effects of the treatments were investigated in a pretest-posttest control group design with follow-up. Multilevel analyses showed significantly positive effects of the parental training on the parents' behavior during homework support. Furthermore, the cooperative reading intervention with parental participation showed significantly more benefit in enhancing motivation than did the cooperative reading condition at school. Effects of the school-home condition were still detectable at 5-month follow-up. This finding highlights the potential of the family in the sustained promotion of reading motivation and confirms notably the importance of emotional support of the home in school achievement. Finally, the effectiveness of the three reading programs on motivation and comprehension was analyzed

again by means of multilevel analyses. Results showed no significant differences when the programs were compared to each other. While effects on reading motivation appeared immediately after the intervention, effects on reading comprehension (word and sentence comprehension) were detected only at follow-up. No effects were found on text comprehension. The findings provide insights into a possible collaboration between school and family in reading promotion and allow conclusions for further projects of collaboration at primary school. Up to now, this study is the only one in the German-speaking area that analyzes the school-home partnership in reading promotion and therefore, it might be an important basis for the implementation of further programs in this domain.