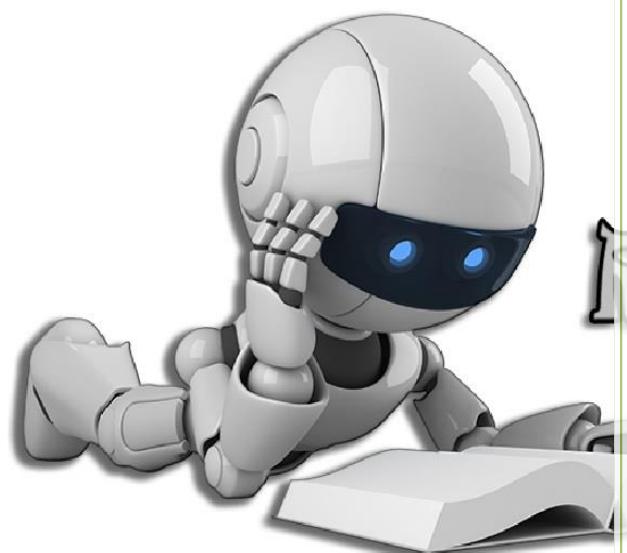


Slovakia – Project Curriculum



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Handbook for reluctant, struggling and poor readers
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GENERAL OVERVIEW OF SLOVAK CURRICULUM

1. NEEDS ANALYSIS

The need to develop and implement more successful methods to improve the reading comprehension of children is urgent. According to the PISA survey 60 % of Slovak students fell into the risk group in the domain of reading comprehension. “For the first time in history Slovakia scored significantly below the OECD average in the programme for international student assessment. The result constitutes a dramatic decrease in performance compared to 2009 in all domains.”¹ One of the domains was reading comprehension.

PISA describes reading literacy as „understanding, using and reflecting on written texts, in order to achieve one’s goals, to develop one’s knowledge and potential and to participate in society.”²

The need to develop and implement more successful methods to improve the reading comprehension of school age children is pressing. The RSP Readers curriculum is primarily designed for students from 12 -19 in urban schools. Its main instructional goals are:

- (1) to motivate students towards reading by selecting books and texts according to their interests.
- (2) to prepare unusual, innovative pre-reading, reading and post- reading activities.
- (3) to organise special after-school and extra-curricular activities which will enhance the RSP readers’ interest in reading.

The selection of these instructional goals, including the choice to focus specifically on motivation and making inferences, was the result of the former questionnaires implemented at schools. The curriculum focuses on two target groups – students and teachers. We designed all the activities and methods to be used in all grades of secondary schools. All of them can be adjusted to different grades by choosing an appropriate text or story.

We relied on three central principles of learning in developing the RSP readers’ curriculum. Domain-based learning, modelling, and learning in multiple contexts were particularly well-suited for creating a social cognitive reading program and were guiding frameworks during the curriculum development process.

Data sources - a questionnaire, observations – we used two types of questionnaires – one for teachers and the other for students

Data evaluation – needs identification and analysis:

Strengths	Weaknesses
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Motivation of RSP readers - Teachers can improve their skills in RSP readers teaching - Not only RSP readers can be involved - Individual attention is possible 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Lack of motivation – teachers and students - Support in the family background - Need to be balanced with traditional methods



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<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Visualisation - No special training needed for teachers 	
Opportunities <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Education can be tailored to students' needs - Teachers have a source of activities for RSP readers 	Threats <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Lack of time to work with RSP readers

All the primary and secondary schools in Slovakia must act upon the law no. 245/2008 collection of laws on education and training (Education Law) and on amendment of certain laws. According to the Slovak current initiatives and policies all the schools in Slovakia must act upon the **INNOVATIVE SCHOOL EDUCATIONAL PROGRAMME** for grammar schools with a four-year and a five years training programs. All the policies are available at <http://www.statpedu.sk/>

1.1 Reading comprehension skills are included in the lessons of mother tongue and the lessons of foreign languages:

Reading literacy in Slovak language:

- ▶ to improve analytical reading and to improve the skills to work with the meaning of the literary text on a higher individual level
- ▶ The education leads toward increasing the language culture, to improvement of reading competences focused on the work with the text (reading comprehension), the analyses of the text and its assessment.
- ▶ The aim of the Slovak language is to lead the students towards language and cultural awareness not only within the Europe but the whole world but within different social environments as well.
- ▶ Through the awareness of the language significance for the national culture, the students should understand the differences, tolerance and orientation within a multicultural environment.
- ▶ The aim within the literary section is to gradually improve the literary competences from analytical reading to skills to work with the meaning of the literary texts on a higher individual level of working with the text (synthetic and evaluation reading).
- ▶ Within the competences to read comprehensively coherent and incoherent texts, the text-based section represents a room for analyses.
- ▶ It means a room for deduction, confirmation of different terms and achievement of competences.

Literary section

- ▶ Permanent improvement of reading and interpretational skills of the students.
- ▶ Improvement of reading as a tool for versatile acquirement of a literary text.

1.2 Reading literacy in foreign languages and British and American literature: by the end of secondary education students:



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- ▶ are able to get information from ordinary texts
- ▶ understand not complicated non-fiction texts
- ▶ find specific and detailed information in different texts; distinguish the main and extended information in a text which clear logical structure
- ▶ guess the meaning of unknown words from a context and change reading strategies according to the type and purpose of texts
- ▶ read correspondence which is connected with their interests and immediately understand them main idea of a text
- ▶ understand articles and news dealing with current problems in which writers express their specific attitudes and opinions
- ▶ understand the main conclusions in clear argumentative texts including the main argumentative line of a problem being presented

2. PLANNING GOALS AND OUTCOMES

In spite of fulfilling these goals of our national curriculum the level of reading literacy and the interest of our students is still not sufficient. The school has been focusing on improving the reading skills of the students and enhance their willingness to read. School organizes different activities like a relay-race reading in Slovak language and English language, cooperates closely with the local library, where teachers and students meet contemporary authors. The national curriculum requires a high level of reading literacy therefore there is a necessity to improve the reading competences of the students.

Our goal is to focus on practical needs of learners and society. We use educational philosophies that emphasize individual needs of learners, the role of individual experience and the need to develop awareness, self-reflection and critical thinking. The main instructional goal we would like to achieve is a reading comprehension strategy: visualising and making inferences.

We have prepared some activities to promote the project in our school.

Knowledge:

Students:

- a) to develop their reading fluency
- b) to improve their reading comprehension

Students are able to

- a) to organise information in a specific way
- b) to understand a text being read.
- c) to find the main character in a text
- d) to differentiate supporting characters from the main character
- e) to identify the main characteristics of the characters
- f) to identify the topic of the excerpts
- g) to select information.

Skills:



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Students are able to:

- a) to analyse texts
- b) to work with different types of dictionaries
- c) to search for and classify information
- d) to identify and interpret correctly the feelings of the characters in the books
- e) to put the particular excerpts in the correct order according to some links
- f) to work in groups.
- g) to create a characteristic of a character based on the excerpts.
- h) to distinguish reality and fantasy
- i) to make predictions
- j) to compare and contrast
- k) to summarize

Competences:

Students are able to:

- a) to work individually or in a team
- b) to accept others in the group
- c) to make connections between fiction and real life or personal experiences
- d) to visualise material read
- e) to follow specific instructions and conventions
- f) to evaluate an evidence
- g) to support and justify their opinions

2.1 USING BLOOM'S TAXONOMY FOR READING COMPREHENSION

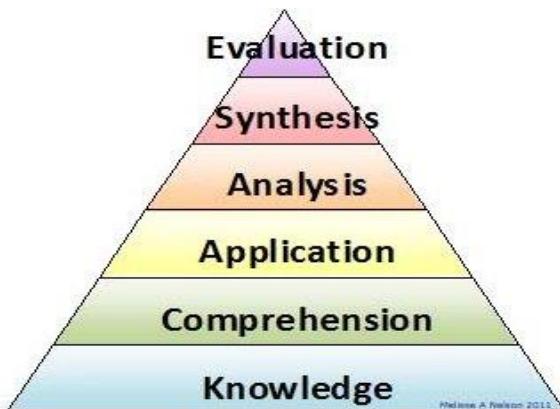
Bloom's objectives were separated into three domains:

1. **Cognitive objectives** are associated with facts and skills. Recalling, reciting, creating, designing.
2. **Affective objectives** are those that display feeling and attitude and are often quite important in teaching and learning.
3. **Psycho-motor objectives** are related to the development of physical skills, movement and coordination.

Bloom's Taxonomy of the Cognitive Domain



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Below we have included the most relevant words per category that we might use with secondary school students.³

KNOWLEDGE		
USEFUL VERBS	SAMPLE QUESTIONS	POTENTIAL ACTIVITIES AND PRODUCTS
Tell	What happened after...?	Make a list of the main events..
List	How many...?	Make a timeline of events.
Describe	Who was it that...?	Make a facts chart.
Relate	Can you name the...?	Write a list of any pieces of information you can remember.
Locate	Describe what happened at...?	List all the in the story/article/reading piece.
Write	Who spoke to...?	Make a chart showing...
Find	Can you tell why...?	
State	Find the meaning of...?	
Name	What is...?	
	Which is true or false...?	

COMPREHENSION		
USEFUL VERBS	SAMPLE QUESTIONS	POTENTIAL ACTIVITIES AND PRODUCTS
Explain	Can you write in your own words...?	Cut out or draw pictures to show a particular event.
Interpret	Can you write a brief outline...?	Illustrate what you think the main idea was.
Outline	What do you think could of happened next...?	Make a cartoon strip showing the sequence of events.
Discuss	Who do you think...?	Write and perform a play based on the story.
Distinguish	What was the main idea...?	Retell the story in your words.
Predict	Who was the key character...?	Paint a picture of some aspect you like.
Restate	Can you distinguish between...?	Write a summary report of an event.
Translate	What differences exist between...?	
Compare		
Describe		



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	<p>Can you provide an example of what you mean...?</p> <p>Can you provide a definition for...?</p>	<p>Prepare a flow chart to illustrate the sequence of events.</p> <p>Make a colouring book.</p>
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APPLICATION		
USEFUL VERBS	SAMPLE QUESTIONS	POTENTIAL ACTIVITIES AND PRODUCTS
Solve Show Use Illustrate Construct Complete Examine Classify	Do you know another instance where...? Could this have happened in...? Can you group by characteristics such as...? What factors would you change if...? Can you apply the method used to some experience of your own...? What questions would you ask of...? From the information given, can you develop a set of instructions about...? Would this information be useful if you had a ...?	Construct a model to demonstrate how it will work. Make a scrapbook about the areas of study. Take a collection of photographs to demonstrate a particular point. Make up a puzzle game using the ideas from the study area. Make a clay model of an item in the material. Design a market strategy for your product using a known strategy as a model. Paint a mural using the same materials. Write a textbook about... for others.

ANALYSIS		
USEFUL VERBS	SAMPLE QUESTIONS	POTENTIAL ACTIVITIES AND PRODUCTS
Analyse Distinguish Examine Compare Contrast Investigate Categorise Identify Explain Separate Advertise	Which events could have happened...? I ... happened, what might the ending have been? How was this similar to...? What was the underlying theme of...? What do you see as other possible outcomes? Why did ... changes occur? Can you compare your ... with that presented in...? Can you explain what must have	Design a questionnaire to gather information. Write a commercial to sell a new product. Conduct an investigation to produce information to support a view. Make a flow chart to show the critical stages. Construct a graph to illustrate selected information. Make a family tree showing relationships. Put on a play about the study area.



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	<p>happened when...?</p> <p>How is ... similar to ...?</p> <p>What are some of the problems of...?</p> <p>Can you distinguish between...?</p> <p>What were some of the motives behind...?</p> <p>What was the turning point in the game?</p> <p>What was the problem with...?</p>	<p>Write a biography of the study person.</p> <p>Prepare a report about the area of study.</p> <p>Arrange a party. Make all the arrangements and record the steps needed.</p> <p>Review a work of art in terms of form, colour and texture.</p> <p>Review a film</p>
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SYNTHESIS		
USEFUL VERBS	SAMPLE QUESTIONS	POTENTIAL ACTIVITIES AND PRODUCTS
Create Invent Compose Predict Plan Construct Design Imagine Propose Devise Formulate	Can you design a ... to ...? Why not compose a song about...? Can you see a possible solution to...? If you had access to all resources how would you deal with...? Why don't you devise your own way to deal with...? What would happen if...? How many ways can you...? Can you create new and unusual uses for...? Can you write a new recipe for a tasty dish? Can you develop a proposal which would...	Invent a machine to do a specific task. Design a building to house your study. Create a new product. Give it a name and plan a marketing campaign. Write about your feelings in relation to... Write a TV show, play, puppet show, role play, song or pantomime about...? Design a record, book, or magazine cover for...? Make up a new language code and write material using it. Sell an idea. Devise a way to... Compose a rhythm or put new words to a known melody.

EVALUATION		
USEFUL VERBS	SAMPLE QUESTIONS	POTENTIAL ACTIVITIES AND PRODUCTS
Judge Select Choose Decide Justify	Is there a better solution to... Judge the value of... Can you defend your position about...? Do you think ... is a good or a bad	Prepare a list of criteria to judge a ... show. Indicate priority and ratings. Conduct a debate about an issue of special interest. Make a booklet about 5 rules you see as



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Debate Verify Argue Recommend Assess Discuss Rate Prioritise Determine	thing? How would you have handled...? What changes to ... would you recommend? Do you believe? Are you a ... person? How would you feel if...? How effective are...? What do you think about...?	important. Convince others. Form a panel to discuss views, e.g. "Learning at School." Write a letter to ... advising on changes needed at... Write a report. Prepare a case to present your view
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Doing these activities we noticed a higher interest in reading. We have more students borrowing books from the school library and participating in different competitions and activities.

2.2 Plan of activities focused on the improvement of reading literacy and comprehension:

- ▶ Replenishment of the school library with Slovak and English books
- ▶ Project Erasmus + : Handbook for reluctant, struggling and poor readers
- ▶ All year-long project: **Wall reading**: reading competition in Slovak and English language (<https://gymrv.edupage.org/>)
- ▶ **Tearoom**: literary mornings and afternoons in Slovak and English language
- ▶ **Blog**: Bookworm in Slovak and English language (<http://bookworm.6f.sk/>)
- ▶ **Book market**: new books and second hand books
- ▶ Cooperation with the library: interviews with contemporary authors
- ▶ **Book hunting competition** in the library: in Slovak and English language
- ▶ **Book code**: competition in Slovak and English language
- ▶ **Relay-race reading** in Slovak and English language
- ▶ **Literary seminar**: workshops for students of primary schools and secondary schools in Slovak and English language
- ▶ **Literary seminar**: workshops for teachers of primary schools and secondary schools in Slovak and English language in the Eastern Slovak county
- ▶ Computer game focused on the improvement of reading literacy in Slovak and English language
- ▶ **The most interesting event of the school library competition 2018**: organised by the Slovak pedagogical library
- ▶ **Chateau library day**
- ▶ The most creative **Book mark** competition
- ▶ **Language Flower competition**: recitation of poetry and prose on a national level in English language
- ▶ **Hviezdoslavov Kubín**: recitation of poetry and prose on a national level in English language
- ▶ **Zlaté pero, zlatá podkova a zlatý vlas**: recitation of poetry and prose on a national level in English language

