

Slovakia – Research report in the field of motivational activities



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Handbook for reluctant, struggling and poor readers
(project no. - 2016-1-HR01-KA201-022159)
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REPORT on the research in the field of motivational activities

Report on the conducted research in field of specified activities and teaching methods(A2.1)

At the Gymnázium P.J.Šafárika – P.J.Šafárik Gimnázium in Rožňava we have a language committee. This language committee involves all the teachers of not just foreign languages but the teachers of the mother tongue. As our school provides a special curriculum for those students whose mother tongue is Hungarian language, this committee involves not just the teachers of Slovak language but the teachers of Hungarian language as well. There is a plan of this committee and we involved the topic of RSP readers in our plan. During all the year the members of this committee are informed about the ongoing project and about the project results and outcomes. In February and March our aim was to focus on the problems with RSP readers and we tried to discuss this matter with the members of the language committee. The task of the teachers was to collect information about the problems, and to come up with some ideas how to solve these problems with RSP readers.



Research carried out among the students

On 17th March we had a meeting where we discussed what is not “IN” anymore within the language teaching and the teachers came up with some “new methods” they tried out during the lessons.

Except for our school we visited 5 more schools in our area and country and we met teachers and students from target groups (A2.3).

We visited 4 schools: Secondary grammar school in Dobšiná (Spojená škola, Zimná 96, Dobšiná org. zl. Gymnázium, SNP 607, Dobšiná), Specialised high school for nurses (Stredná zdravotnícka škola - Egészségügyi Középiskola, Rožňava), Business



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academy (Obchodná akadémia Rožňava), Primary school Pionierov street (Základná škola Ulica pionierov 1, Rožňava). Then we contacted the Secondary grammar school in Sobrance (Gymnázium -Sobrance) but we were discussing the topics via skype as this school is too far away from our school. We involved a teacher (who is not participating in our project) from our school teaching as well the Hungarian classes (as it is a special curriculum for the minorities living in our region).

On 15th March the project manager visited the Secondary grammar school in Dobšiná. The meeting with the teachers was fruitful. The project ideology was presented and we introduced the outcomes as well. The teachers welcomed this project and they were curious mostly about the project outcomes which will be beneficial for both the teachers and the students.

The school struggles with the same problems connected with the reading literacy and reading comprehension and they confirmed that less and less students are interested in reading books or reading in general. They also affirmed that the biggest problems with reading are obvious during the “maturita exams”. The exam results are not satisfactory and both the Slovak language tests and the English language tests require a high level of reading literacy.



On 17th March we were welcomed by our colleagues and students at the business academy in Rožňava. This school has bilingual classes as well so we wanted to compare our findings with those they have gained. They reported that most of the



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students are not interested in reading at all. The most serious issue they are facing is that they have lack of motivation both from the side of the teachers and as well the students. They have to meet the requirements of the national curriculum therefore they have no time for improving those skills which they should.

On 20th March we discussed the issues connected with our project at the Specialised high school for nurses (Stredná zdravotnícka škola - Egészségügyi Közéiskola, Rožňava). This school is a specialized high school and the results of the students are not as satisfactory as the results at grammar schools or business academy. The students from poorer backgrounds do not have sufficient reading comprehension skills. 22nd March we decided to visit a primary school as well where we wanted to find out their attitude towards enhancing reading literacy and we wanted to compare the methods they use with the methods used at high schools. Primary school Pionierov street (Základná škola Ulica pionierov 1, Rožňava) is a school which we cooperate with and most of the students coming to our Secondary grammar school are coming from this primary school.

To have an insight in the methods and ways of teaching reading literacy we decided to contact the Secondary grammar school in Sobrance (Gymnázium Sobrance) on 23rd March. As this school is not in our region we had a skype conference.



One of our teachers not involved in the project decided to participate in this research as well. And she added to our results a lot of significant information and ideas.

The best examples of activities which are proposed by our teachers are:

1. The method of Six Thinking Hats designed by Edward de Bono. (Managing Blue, Information White, Emotions Red, Discernment Black, Optimistic response Yellow, Creativity Green)



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2. The reading circles
3. To remake the stories read during the lessons into comics.
4. Using film versions of the books we read
5. On every lesson there is one student announcing the happenings of the previous day from an English website created for English learners or from BBC or CNN websites.
6. Theatre performances and the task of students is to read the book before or after it
7. Creating a poster
8. Drawing stories, creating a painting of a character or a part of the story
9. Comparing a film with a book and discussing the differences.
10. Creating a reading competition. Each team could prepare questions about a particular book and ask them from each other. The winning team would be awarded.
11. An after-reading activities: creating a script and a performance based on the particular book.
12. Comparison of characters from different books
13. Using Kahoot
14. Using Slovak spectator (newspaper) and National Geographic
15. Peer reading: involving the well-reading classmates

The most significant findings from the research are:

1. To observe and encourage the improvement of the students
2. To implement different innovative methods wherever teachers can
3. To work on the students' self-concept
4. To get over serious obstacles (social, cultural, economic, prejudice towards migrant students etc.)
5. To increase the exchange of expertise, skill and information
6. To use motivational literature and literature which are in accordance with the interest of our students (fantasy, literature with boy or girl protagonists).
7. To start up a closer cooperation with the parents who can be factors positively enhancing willingness to read in the free time of the students.
8. Schools should start a close cooperation with the local libraries and they should "refresh" the school libraries.

One disappointing finding after trying to apply this research was that the teachers were not interested in cooperation. They were immediately demotivated when we wanted to discuss what activities they do except for the traditional methods. Most of the teachers do not involve any motivational, innovative activities. These findings are alarming.



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On 22nd March we had a meeting in the local library where we wanted to find out the opinions of the librarians, too. They see the most serious problems at the disability of students to think aloud, they are not able to think aloud about the text they have just read. The readers do not choose appropriate books. Consequently they do not understand what they read. They are not able to find the gist, and are not able to look up the required information in the text. The librarians in Rožňava think that the school should re-evaluate the books which are compulsory for students, these books are obsolete, dull for the students in the 21st century. We should support the self-confidence of our students in reading. The library in Rožňava is trying to focus on organising different cultural- educational activities, cultural-social activities, interviews with contemporary writers, individual work with the students while selecting appropriate literature. They are trying to encourage students to take part in interviews and activities in the library in the afternoons, after school. They are able to organise events according to the demands of the schools and teachers.

Numerous articles, initiatives, researches were read by the project members in order to gather information (A.2.2).

The most important conclusions and recommendations are:

1. The teachers should permanently give feed-back to students, to focus on self-reflexion, to lead students towards self-evaluation and to be able to analyse.
2. "The tests can serve as examples of preparing reading comprehension questions."
3. "Teachers should use their fantasy and creativity while preparing texts for reading. The students shouldn't read what is strictly given by the national curriculum but teachers should adjust the texts to the needs and interests of the students. "
4. To create reading workshops."
5. "To start cooperation with the agencies like INEKO in Slovakia to find solutions to these problems."
6. "To have a reading role models for teens (teachers, parents or their classmates.) Reading aloud is still a good way of practising. Put the right resource in the right hands at the right time – teachers and library staff not only have to know their stock, but also know their students."
7. "It is needed to refresh our school libraries and there can be a possibility to have not only teachers in our libraries but maybe to have some students there who are interested in reading.
8. "Five Evidence-Based Interventions can be used in our methodology (Accelerated/ Accelewrite, Peer Reading, Toe by Toe, SNIP, ARROW). Peers can be effective in raising reading standards, both through co-operative learning and through peer tuition.



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9. The PISA reading assessment is built on three main task characteristics: Processes (aspects) – 1. the cognitive strategies, approaches or purposes that readers use to negotiate their way into, around and among texts 2. Text – the range of material that is read 2. Situation – the range of broad contexts or purposes in which reading takes place.

