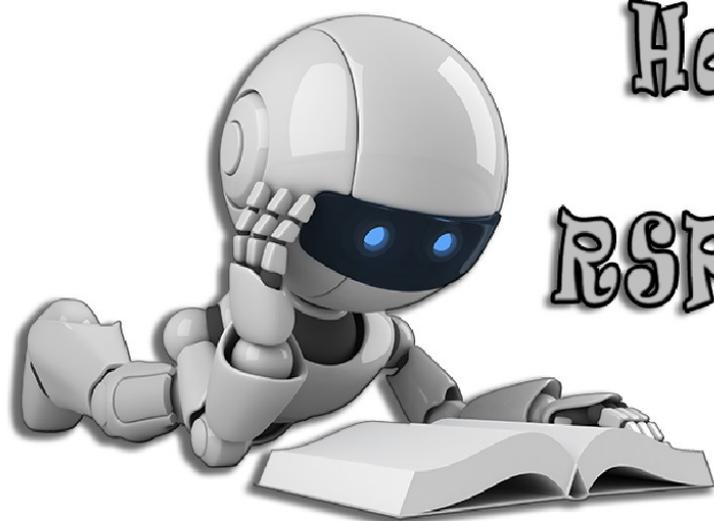


# Italy – Research report in the field of motivational activities



## Handbook 4 RSP readers

LICEO SCIENTIFICO, ARTISTICO,  
LINGUISTICO "GIUSEPPE SEGUENZA"-  
MESSINA



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***Handbook for reluctant, struggling and poor readers***

(project no. - 2016-1-HR01-KA201-022159)

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## REPORT – FIELD WORK

The main aim of this report is to sum up the information gathered after interviewing teachers and students from five different schools.

Indeed, this field work aims at acquiring data about the current phenomenon of poor reading and the solutions and methods envisaged and experimented by teachers.

To this purpose five Italian schools were contacted to cooperate in the research and interviews were conducted with teachers and RSP readers among their students.

The schools that contributed to the findings are:

- Istituto professionale per il commercio “Merendino” – Capo d’Orlando (Me)
- Istituto professionale per i servizi commerciali – Naso (Me)
- Liceo Scientifico “Archimede” – Messina
- Istituto Superiore “Emilio Ainis” – Messina
- Istituto Tecnico Industriale “Torricelli” – S.Agata di Militello



Students of the above-listed institutions come from different cultural backgrounds.

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Liceo “Archimede” is specialized in scientific studies and is mostly attended by well- off, middle class pupils from the city of Messina.

IS “Ainis” provides specific courses on social studies and is located on the outskirts of Messina. It is attended by lower class students also coming from the neighbouring villages.

The other three institutions are vocational schools located in the province of Messina and they are mostly attended by lower- class pupils from the neighbouring villages.

From the analysis of the answers given by the five teachers involved - Ms. Daniela D’Amico (Merendino), Ms. Maria Cristina Mangano (Istituto Professionale Naso), Ms. Caterina Longo (Archimede), Ms. Maria Saccà (Ainis), Ms. Domenica Rando (Torricelli) – we can outline the following elements:

- **Number of RSP readers per class:** most teachers reported that more than 50% of the class are RSP readers. Only a few stated that just 20% of the entire class are RSP readers.
- **Teachers’ thoughts, suggestions, recommendations with regard to rsp readers:** what immediately results from the teachers’ answers is the importance of entertainment activities and, above all, the consideration of the students' interests, passions, inclinations or attitudes. Another factor to be taken into account is pupils’ concentration skills and their willingness to devote their free time to reading. It would be helpful to find out if they were more prone to an intellectual or emotional kind of reading. All teachers highlight that literary genres such as fantasy or detective stories could be more appealing when dealing with RSP readers.
- **Additional out of curriculum subject activities conducted by the teachers:** the majority of teachers try to get students hooked on reading through "unconventional" and "out-of-the-box" activities such as: hunting for a book in the school library/ emotional reading in classroom or in a bookshop/students set up a class library thus becoming familiar with the book loan procedure

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- **School activities to encourage reading:** Most schools as institutions attempt to promote reading, when offering such activities as: meeting the author /workshops of creative writing / choosing and listening music that may evoke the book suggestions / dramatisation of literary texts / devising interviews / using other communicative languages or tools for the presentations of the texts students have read
- **Methods and approaches to encourage reading: most teachers do their utmost to devise innovative methods and approaches, namely,** involving students in the choice of the books to read through visits to the school library or the bookshops in town / audiobooks / games (hunt for a book, crosswords, guessing keywords after listening to music / miming activities / riddles.
- **Factors that affect reading:** on the whole, the majority of teachers agree that girls are more prone to reading than boys for the emotional input and the introspection stimuli that it offers. Economic and social factors may influence reading, as well as parents' or adults' reading habits.
- **Purpose of reading:** there are some teachers who think that reading helps the students' enrich their vocabulary and enhance their use of an accurate and smooth syntax. Others associate reading with emotions, intelligence and aesthetic perception. Reading helps students to explore their inner worlds and the reality in which they live.
- **Factors influencing reading motivation:** RSP readers wish to identify themselves with the characters of a novel and go through their emotions or their inner development. The opportunity to link their reading experiences to their personal, creative expressions through writing or other communicative languages. Some teachers believe that the subject of the book and the literary genre may influence reading motivation. Girls usually prefer emotionally involving stories, while boys generally choose detective or adventure stories and contemporary issues.
- **How does the scope of reading material influence the willingness to read outside the classroom:** several teachers state that students are more motivated if they are directly involved in the choice of the text to read so the teachers should share the choice with all the class.
- **How does teachers' attitude influence students' fear of reading out loud?:** some teachers report that RSP readers fear reading out in front of the class, thus revealing that their lack of interest in reading also depends on their difficulty in this activity. Some of them think that RSP readers feel at ease if reading a book is presented as an experience to share

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- **Can teachers' genre influence the willingness to read?:** all the teachers interviewed are women and they do not think that teachers' genre can affect students' willingness to read
- **Can book illustrations, pictures, games and similar materials increase the willingness to read?:** most teachers believe that illustrations and pictures may arouse pupils' curiosity and draw their attention, or playing games may contribute to helping them overcome their reluctance towards reading. One teacher does not agree because she thinks that these tools might be useful when addressing younger RSP readers.
- **Are students more prone to reading e-books rather than printed books?:** teachers have noticed that students still prefer printed books to e-books; one school gave a tablet as a present to the new students in the attempt to encourage them to read.
- **Drama performance aids:** dramatizing some parts of the novel can be useful means to get students closer to literature and may help them develop many cross-curricular competences such as learning to work in groups, organization and respect for rules etc.
- **Quality insurance:** Some teachers think that while choosing the narrative text for RSP readers, it is important to consider the topic and the literary quality . Generally the teachers suggest a novel written in a simple language and a colloquial style for RSP readers, in order to facilitate their enjoyment of the text. However, badly written or superficial books are to be avoided.
- **Factors preventing reading:** most teachers deem that students are biased towards reading since they think it is a boring and compulsory activity.

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Hence, we can conclude that the most crucial factors which impact on reading achievement are gender gap and family/ social backgrounds. The issue of reading engagement is tackled in several ways by teachers who constantly encourage pupils to read a wide range of literary genres and continuously tend to share the choice of books to read with the whole class. These are the most widespread teaching strategies used to reading promotion and the most relevant findings related to the interviews with teachers.



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As regards **students**, each teacher asked five pupils among her class's RSP readers their willingness to answer our questions regarding their reading habits. These are the most relevant outcomes:

- When asked about the factors that influence reading, most of them said that they do not like reading or they find it useless, stressful, boring, whereas they prefer watching films, even dealing with school topics.
- As for the purpose of reading, the majority of them mentioned what their teachers tell them about the importance of reading: it helps them improve their speaking and writing skills, it widens their culture, education.
- When pointing out the factors that influence reading motivation, RSP readers usually say that if the teacher did not involve them in the choice of a text, they would never read. They reply that they are not familiar with any games that might help them love reading.
- Most students do not think that the scope of reading material may influence their willingness to read outside the classroom
- Some students are more fearful to read out loud in front of a strict teachers; others do not care
- It appears that teachers genres do not matter to them
- Most students think that feeling free to choose topics and genres may influence their willingness to read
- As regards illustrations, a few students affirm they can help them get involved in the story; others do not show any particular interest in them. Likewise, surprisingly, they prefer printed books whereas they are not that appealed by digital tools.
- Interestingly, this research has shown that some students were read stories when they were children and they used to enjoy them. However, others were not.
- When asked what book they would burn if they could, the majority of them would throw away classics and schooltexts .
- When asked what a book is for them, their answers were: a universe to discover / a treasure rich in words we do not know that helps us enrich our vocabulary and better our oral communication / a reality that is felt by few people / a way to project myself into a different reality / a means to light the fireplace / a sort of fog where sentences and pictures float / a hobby (even if they say they have no time for reading)

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