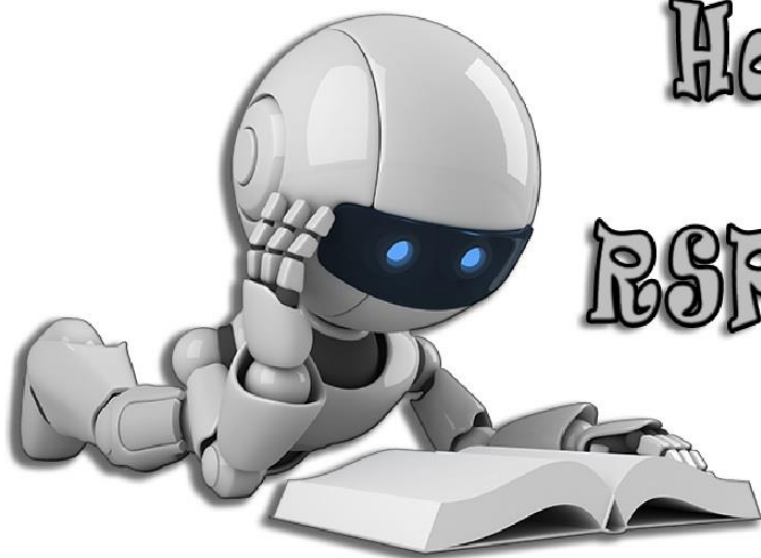


Croatia - Project Curriculum



Handbook 4 RSP readers

X. gimnazija „Ivan Supek“, Zagreb,
Croatia

Co-funded by the
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Handbook for reluctant, struggling and poor readers

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

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Curriculum

for Reluctant, Struggling and Poor readers



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1. Introduction

General observations

Over the last decade, reading issues have become an area of increased interest in Europe and the world. Although the problem is recognized within the educational system and its accompanying structure¹, much of the young people finish their education without sufficient literacy skills, so they go on living with a deficit that cannot be compensated even in adulthood. This failure in their high school education has irrefutable consequences for their future. Lack of awareness of this problem, amongst politicians, decision-makers and other accompanying social structures, is also presented in-depth in other European countries. The need for action is more than urgent.

It is no coincidence that the first PISA program survey conducted in year 2000 was focused on reading literacy. Within the framework of this program, literacy is considered an interdisciplinary key qualification, which can no longer be held only as the task of teaching the mother tongue. It represents the basic qualification for learning within all subject areas required for future occupations and in all areas of lifelong learning.

PISA defines reading literacy as an ability to understand, reflect and engage in writing to achieve personal goals, develop their own knowledge and potential, and actively participate in society. PISA studies define a minimum level of competence as level 2 (out of 5 established levels). The adolescent within the range of expertise level 1 are held as readers of low achievements, poor readers, and belong to a risk group.

The PISA cycle of research in 2015 was the 6th cycle that included the Republic of Croatia for the fourth time, including 5809 fifteenagers in its study. In the field of reading literacy, the Republic of Croatia achieved a below-average score of 487 points (31st place). Comparing the average results on reading literacy with the results of the PISA survey since 2009, Croatia has observed a trend of improving average results. Over a period of six years, 11 points have increased an average score for Croatia.

In year 2011, Croatia also participated in PIRLS survey that evaluates readership competences over a period of ten years. The results of Croatian students are significantly

¹PISA, 2009 When the results of the PISA 2009 survey were published, they produced a shock because they showed that one in five fifteenagers still lack the skills to read and write. Another cause for concern is the spread of discrepancy. Namely, girls read more and more than boys, which again points to the need for changing content that would be more accessible to boys as well as for changes in the profession, traditionally defined as exclusively female.

The European Union has recognized this problem already in 2009, and in February 2011, a high expert group was set up exclusively for reading.

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better than the results achieved in PISA survey. However, when it comes to reading, Croatia stands out with only 17% of students who like to read, 53% who somehow like reading and 29% of those who do not like to read. Of the 57 countries involved in survey, Croatia has the highest percentage of children who do not like to read. Young people's attitude to reading is mainly determined by their reading experience gained during schooling. Unfortunately, modern schools do not recognize their needs because they do not take into consideration the fact that at early age young people are growing in the world of digital media in which the image, rather than the word, often contains the basic meaning, and as such, the "digital natives" (Prensky, 2001) think and process information in a different way, and therefore require new methods of recruitment and an academic atmosphere enriched with digital media.

In order to mediate and develop the reading skills of all students between the ages of 15 and 18, Croatian schools have established a corpus of obligatory literary texts selected according to the criteria of their importance and value within European, world and national literature. This corpus was defined in the mid-nineties of the last century and as such satisfied the criterion of contemporaneity by the end of the nineties. Because of their complexity, the written texts represent a serious problem for a large number of students, especially those who for some reason do not want to read or read unwillingly, and to those who need to take a great effort for reading or do not have the reading skills. When analyzing and interpreting these textbooks, all students are expected to understand these texts. However, the problem begins at a basic level of understanding in the process of reading on their own, after which students are expected to collect and structure text information, taking into account the theory and history of literature. Bearing in mind the fact that the reading level is important for the overall success of the students in education (in all other subjects and areas), for their competitiveness in the European labor market and their personal growth, and with regard to the results achieved in international surveys, there is a constant lookout for better and more specific solutions for raising the level and quality of reading literacy in Croatia.

The Government of the Republic of Croatia adopted the National Strategy for Reading (2015-2020) following the instructions of the Ministry of Culture of the Republic of Croatia, with the aim of updating the problems of reading and involving the various factors of society dealing with reading problems in one way or another.

Along with the shorter training programs and professional education of teachers at the county-level, the Education and Teacher Training Agency organized the fourth Symposium for Teachers and Croatian Language Teachers, entitled "Reading for School and Life", devoted exclusively to reading issues. Based on the available data from the Education and Teacher Training Agency on reading promotion programs, it can be concluded that a large number of such programs are offered and implemented in Croatia. There are motivated teachers and

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students who in most cases have well-developed reading skills and strong or highly expressed reading motivation.

The students we describe as reluctant, struggling and poor readers often remain outside official programs and curricula. There is no systematic and ongoing training of RSP readers in the context of content teaching after the first two grades of elementary school, and adolescents who are struggling with reading no longer find the appropriate support. Their specific potentials and interest in learning cannot be developed due to problems with understanding. Consequently, their performance and results are bad. With such deficits they have been cut off from the ability to achieve higher educational qualifications and, consequently, from better jobs. Lack of concepts and the urgency of the problem in this area are the most concerning issues. Society leaves a lot of untapped educational potential.

2. Objective

Successful strategies and practical work on solving reading problems are rarely part of the Curriculum. The curriculum for RSP readers was designed as part of an extensive project package of measures. It is proposed as a transition model - from the canonical and academic model of education to the areas related to adolescent population, especially to the reluctant, struggling and poor readers. Its purpose is to provide assistance to secondary school teachers, educators, instructors, high school directors and professional services, parents, and all stakeholders in the educational process in developing the skills needed to support RSP readers. The methodologies offered within the curriculum are focused on the simple task of improving their abilities and competencies in reading lessons. The ultimate goal is to raise the quality of teaching and learning through innovative methods that ultimately will create the conditions for a paradigm shift, whenever work with reluctant, struggling and poor readers finds the focus of stakeholders in the educational process.

3. Analysis of the needs

In the Republic of Croatia reading literacy is commonly understood as a competency acquired in elementary school and which, after initial efforts, no longer needs to be systematically developed. However, from surveys on reading that are being conducted during the last two decades, we know that such a conclusion is a fundamental mistake. Reading literacy must be systematically developed after initial programs, through different age groups, through a variety of media and other languages.

The concept of reading as an extremely complex and largely specific task, which is systematically nurtured at all age levels and in all content areas, is a part of the Croatian school

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system. Learning to read and write is taught by teaching the mother tongue in the first two to three school years; after that period, these skills are taken for granted. Furthermore, the mother tongue, as well as the area of content teaching, concentrates on the transfer of specialized subject knowledge. On the contrary, according to many international surveys in this area ², it is obvious that reading and writing skills must be developed continuously and specifically in all content areas.

3.1 Survey on reading habits

At the beginning of the two-year project, partner countries participated in qualitative research based on the data collected through the GoogleDocs tool. A survey of reading habits was conducted and processed. The poll filled 8131 high school students in 4 partner countries - Italy, the Czech Republic, Slovakia and Croatia.

The questionnaire, which was primarily focused on RSP readers, collected data on reading habits of this high-school population aged 15 to 18 years. Respondents' answers, among other things, contain valuable information about:

- the current state of reading skills developed among the target population
- the time students dedicate to reading
- types of literature read by personal choice
- reasons for not reading more
- entry reading points (electronic books, journals, print editions ...)
- relation to mandatory and canonical texts
- motivation for reading
- self-image as a (non) reader - self-evaluation of reading literacy.

The aim of this survey was focused on the following issues:

- Better understanding of the phenomena of poorly developed reading literacy and RSP readers
- Analysis of issues related to readership skills of RSP readers
- Designing guidelines for further development and empowering reading skills with RSP readers.

² PIRLS, 2006, PISA, 2009, ADORE, 2009, Eurydice 2011, HLGEL, 2012

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In the Republic of Croatia, the Survey on reading habits was conducted in 73 high schools and included 5331 subjects, 43% of girls and 57% of boys. The sample was relatively homogeneous and included several age groups of readers aged 15 years - 27.9%, 16 years - 24.8%, 17 years - 23% and 24.3% of the subjects were in the age group of 18. Based on the analysis of the data obtained, students aged 16 to 17 enjoy reading more than those aged 15 and 18. Such results can be explained by an approach that assumes that 15-year-olds pass through the intensive development period, while re-awakening reading interest at the age of 18 can be linked to school commitments and decisions related to further education. Collected data on the type of non-compulsory texts selected by students to read, along with mandatory school titles, show that they most often choose printed books (28.7%) or read online on web-sites (28.3%), and rarely choose electronic books. The questionnaire included also a direct question related to greater motivation for reading. The students answered that they would read more if: 1. the books were more interesting; 2. they had less school obligations. One of the questions was about the reasons why they do not read more. As a main reason students have stated was their impression they were slow readers, i.e. they think reading is a long-lasting process during which they often feel a lack of self-confidence. The main demotivating factor for these students lies in the lack of interest for mandatory school materials. Many students hold canonical literature relevant to their own interests and lives. Possible answers may also be found in the statement that "most of the literature we teach in schools originally was written by adults and that it is primarily intended for adults. We teach such literature, not because it is inherently suitable for teenagers but because we are trying to offer them cultural education in this process." (HLGEL, 2012)

Traditional teaching in Croatia is organized and focused on teachers. Work on teaching units begins by setting the goals of learning and the level of student achievement determined by the teacher in accordance with the external specifications derived from teaching plans, programs and educational standards. The choice of materials and methods, the realization of teaching units and the final tests for the adoption of content refer to pre-defined learning objectives. Tests compare individual learner's achievements in accordance with previously defined criteria, which ultimately lead to student ranking through summative assessment. Such organisation of teaching hour is natural for schools and educational systems whose primary goal is to transfer content (learning through content expertise / content-focused curriculum) that require teachers' mastery to ensure students' success (performance-oriented education systems).

A considerable number of pupils read below the acceptable level because they lack the ability to apply a comprehension strategy to create the meaning of the subject read. This inability is worsened by the pattern of recruitment in many secondary schools, which neglects the fact of lack of students' understanding. By transferring the teaching content through the model of

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assigning the reading homework and its subsequent interpretation, the teachers provide reading content outside the classroom, and then, the next day, they lecture on the content themselves. As a result of such a model, students implicitly find out that the contents of the literary work / reading task they failed to complete (or have not even begun) would be explained on the regular class. Consequently, students' need to activate their own abilities of comprehension is reduced.

Common way of organising reading lessons within the RSP readers' valid curriculum has three consequences:

- Provides a permanent proof of their failure by presenting a confirmation of the existing negative personal concept, preventing them from focusing on improving their reading.
- Analysis of their personal strengths and weaknesses takes place only after the curriculum has been completed, for students it is already too late. Teaching support therefore does not follow the lessons to prevent failure, but it only responds to it.
- RSP readers are caught in an external differentiation system that includes supplementary / corrective teaching, private lessons, and repetition at lower school levels.

In most cases, customary lessons transfer only contents specific to a particular subject. Learning takes place in order to gain knowledge of the subject area and to align with external goals and assessments (learning about / knowledge of). This approach to learning no longer corresponds to the recent knowledge about this area. The wave of tests in the light of PISA surveys even aggravated the problem. Showing to a poor reader how weak his performance is in relation to others, only confirms the worst: his already problematic personal concept, giving him a small opportunity to improve. On the contrary, evidence-based teaching should ensure the transfer of knowledge from learning the subject content to learning focused on transfer of students' competences (learning to do / know how).

4. Strengthening the profile of teaching professions

"Visible teaching and learning occurs when there is deliberate practice aimed at attaining mastery of the goal, when there is feedback given and sought, and when there are active, passionate, and engaging people (teacher, students, peers) participating in the act of learning."(J. Hattie, p. 22)³

³ Hattie argues convincingly that the effectiveness of teaching increases when a teacher acts as an activator instead of a leader, which is a refreshing viewpoint at a time when teaching based on, for example, a problem-based approach has the consequence of placing a teacher into a subordinate plan.

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4.1. Components of good practice in teaching

The great international surveys carried out in recent decades suggest that current educational reform is primarily based on increasing student achievement levels, and that indicators of these achievements, if measurable by standardized large-scale estimates, are the only important category. At present, most European reforms define educational standards and competences through measurable outcomes without providing sufficient support to teachers, headmasters, and professional school staff in relation to their roles to raise the required level of student achievement. This contribution is clearly in the interest of this project and its curricula for RSP readers.

The question we have asked was:
What are the components of good practice that teachers would use to support and develop reading skills in RSP readers?

- 1) Bearing in mind that most RSP readers did not develop a stable concept of reader's self-determination, the primary goal is to raise their confidence by raising the level of reading competences. Good practice in this respect starts with humanistic and / or holistic pedagogy based on a holistic developmental approach, taking into account the affective deployment area and inner life of the students, not just cognitive and psychomotoric. Changing the personal concept of a RSP reader is essential and will only be achieved by addressing the full person of the adolescent, helping them overcome the lack of confidence in their own abilities and the lack of motivation for better learning of reading and/or better reading with a view to more effective learning.
- 2) Focus on the cycle-oriented form of organization with the student at the center of the process. Goal setting, choice of materials, and teaching methods are based on the diagnosis of strengths and weaknesses of RSP readers, which are being communicated to and discussed with students. Instructions should be followed by an assessment, continuous calibration of goals and methodical decisions in line with students' needs and abilities (formative assessments). The aim is to develop students' reading competences for learning the subject contents (competency-oriented curriculum).
- 3) Understanding the culture and mastering non-mother tongues must become part of a comprehensive approach to reading literacy. Students should be challenged to think critically about the world, about the interdependence of

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peoples from different continents, to appreciate different ways of thinking, praying, dressing or behaving, in an open and tolerant way. The reading process involves re-examining yourself and your own identity whenever it comes into contact with 'others'. For all this, reading skills are crucial.

- 4) Good practice integrates active reading with metacognition and learning of how to learn. Using metacognitive methods encourages active reading, which is only possible when students learn how to do it and how to manage their reading. Until they possess the necessary cognitive, metacognitive and affective skills, students cannot be given the opportunity for independent learning and active work. In order for the learning activity to be authentic, students must have ownership of the performance of reading, and teaching should support students in assuming responsibility for setting up and monitoring their goals and reading strategies. This implies the development of students' metacognitive skills and self-regulated learning. Students can use their metacognitive skills to regulate motivation and cognitive processing while reading. Pupils who are aware of the advantages and disadvantages of their knowledge, strategies, feelings and motivations are more able to regulate their reading by planning and following the cognitive processes needed to understand. The teaching process that promotes metacognitive skills places the emphasis on the changed role of the teacher who directs the students towards metacognitive and self-regulated learning. Experiential and collaborative learning is encouraged in a way that students are "immersed" in content and learning activities that are applicable and linked to a real life.
- 5) Encouraging the development of metacognitive skills in non-readers involves acquiring conscious learning control, planning and selecting reading strategies, reading progress tracking, debugging and performance analysis, and changing strategies and behaviors whenever necessary. Metacognitive readers understand their reading, they know how they read, what ways are the best for them, and when they are ineffective in learning, i.e. students self-evaluate their reading and success strategies. Students also discuss among themselves, and with the teacher, about how they are reading, what they are thinking when reading, but also about different reading modes in general, and how they can improve their reading. Classes in which metacognition is respected provide enough time to focus on the process as well as time for reflexive and strategic thinking and for suggestions on how to improve their own learning (Wall and Hall, 2016).

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- 6) Involving students in curriculum planning gives them the ability to participate in decisions related to the process and even control it. The experience of participating in defining teaching goals can change their skeptical attitude toward reading and education and teaching in general. This important motivational component can enhance their self-esteem and self-efficacy.
- 7) To develop reading comprehension and enjoyment of reading, it is necessary for RSP readers to engage in the reading texts. There are two aspects of this involvement: (1) Relating to the influence of text and emotions such as enjoyment and interest, which can be considered as positive reading outcomes. Inclusion occurs, for example, when a student is completely drawn to reading, loses feelings of time and forgets about himself and the environment. (2) Refers to the reaction process provoked by the text content. This cognitive and social aspect of inclusion focuses on the nature of the comprehension process involved in effective reading, enabling the reader to understand the text message and give their personal answers to it. This involvement occurs when students are allowed to elaborate their personal answers and views on a particular text in co-operation with peers and teachers. Regardless of the form to be given to this personal answer (posters, drawings, performances, etc.), such practices have a positive impact on reading motivation as they enable the student's use of autonomy and thinking skills while providing opportunities for improving their interpretative skills in the cognitive field. (ADORE, 2009).
- 8) High school teachers have a major influence on the degree of autonomy in students because they determine the extent to which pupils can choose. Several studies have shown that those teachers who show high levels of control and limit the students' choice have a bad influence on the development of autonomy and internal motivation towards reading and learning at all. It is therefore implied that the possibility of choice and independent selection plays an important role in the development of a self-regulating desire to read outside the school-based reading. The inevitable demand for teaching aimed at working with RSP readers is the freedom of choice of material and reading content as the expression of student interests and needs. The choice and opportunity for self-directed improvement enhance the intrinsic motivation of students by allowing them a greater degree of autonomy. In doing so, a self-regulated learners control their reading processes by selecting and organizing relevant information and building links to the existing knowledge.

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- 9) Creating a positive classroom environment: The environment that enhances reading efficiency presupposes interaction between teachers and students. In respect to that, a fundamental change in the education culture in the classroom is indispensable. In the classroom, it is necessary to shape the social dimension of learning actively. In addition, it is linked to the psychological and cognitive aspects. Interaction between teachers and students, as well as among students themselves, is organized so that those who are struggling with reading can clearly express and address the problems of reading and understanding texts without fear of potential inconvenience.
- 10) “Unlike the systems focused on achieving student success, which traditionally take the linear learning development process for all students, support systems accept the fact of discontinuous individual development and realize a learning model in which RSP reader / student get a support in the process of acquiring reading competences provided by a competent teacher, who works with students individually within their proximal development zone” (Vygotsky). A competent teacher represents the social competency requirements, which he / she as an adult is familiar with and which he / she has to communicate to his / her students. In the first place, the teacher must identify the current phase of RSP reader’s / student’s development that is defined by an independent problem solving / student’s activities. Furthermore, the teacher defines the potential degree of competency development that students can achieve by providing targeted support. Finally, the teacher's work consists of actual help to students in their progress from current to potential development stage.
- 11) The new student roles based on active reading include self-regulated reading, metacognitive skills, student autonomy and appreciation of their experiences and previous knowledge, student involvement in planning, performance and evaluation of the reading process, construction and reconciliation of knowledge with partner approach nurtured between students and teachers, as well as between students. When initiating an active reading, it is possible that students, if they are accustomed to passive approach in their earlier education, will not initially accept the active involvement in the reading process as they lose the security of their protected and long-accepted passivity. Therefore, to activate the RSP readers, the reading lessons have to be motivating, vivid and associated with real life, supportive for the realization of different interests among students and encouraging for their personal

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contribution. From the beginning of the teaching planning to its evaluation, it is necessary to include students, their interests and opportunities, as well as their expectations (Pranjić, 2005).

- 12) The promotion of active readership processes in the class affects the role of teachers who acquire a new pedagogical role in this process (OECD Active Learning Project; Case Studies in Eight Different Countries, 1997). This role involves facilitating learning, giving students a greater responsibility, practicing democracy and negotiating with students about objectives, methods and assessments of their learning, and respecting students themselves as sources of one to each other. The teacher introduces teaching methods based on independent learning, multiple collaborative arrangements, multiple projects and open assignments, enables students to collaborate, and often, teachers themselves are partners in the learning group. The place of the teacher is no longer in front of the classroom or at its center, but as an expert teacher who circles the classroom, learning with the students and trying to give them more space. The teacher takes on the role of the catalyst in the learning process and directs it to the right direction.

- 13) The step guide cycle is embedded in an environment that enhances learning and presupposes interaction between teachers and students. For the actual organization of teaching, (ADORE, 2009) a set of instructional steps are proposed, represented in the circular cycle:

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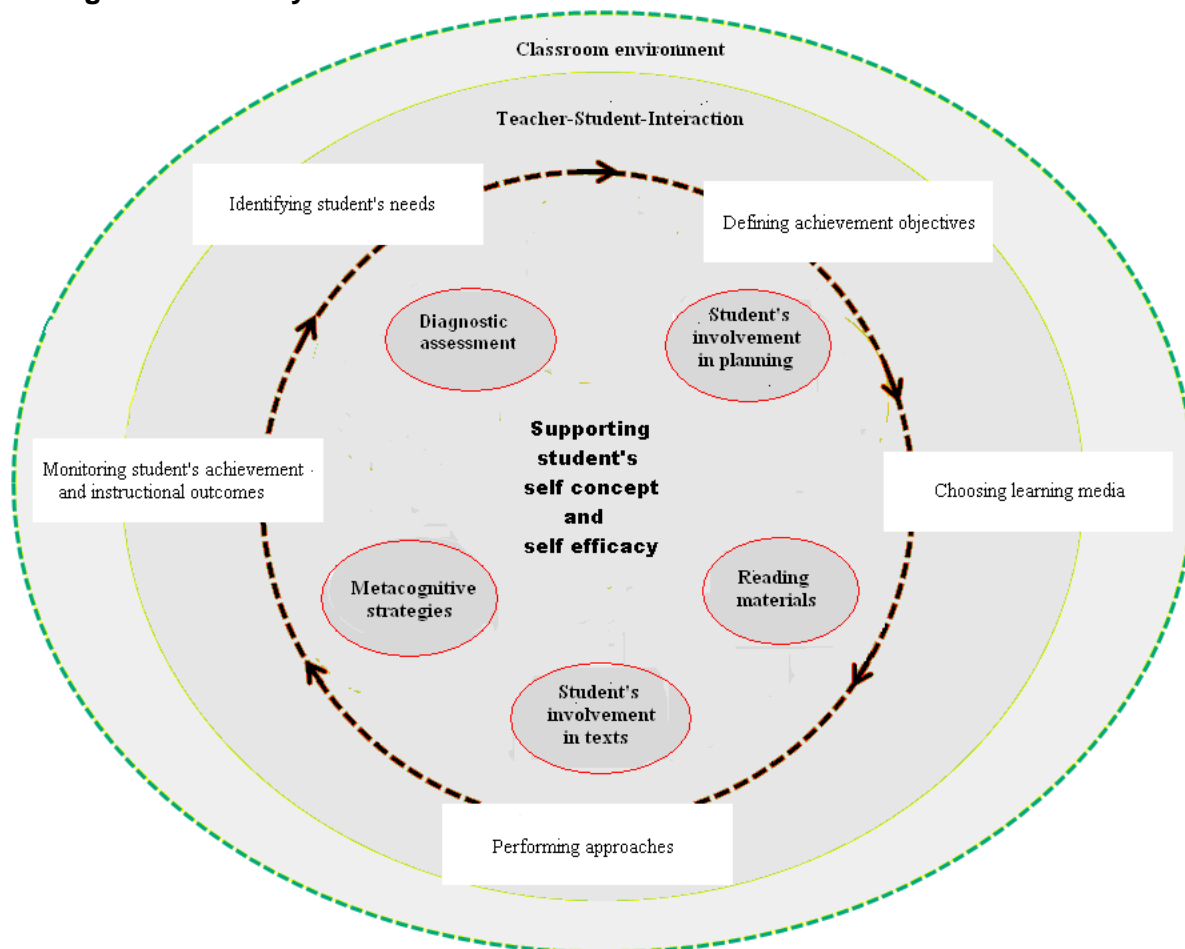
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Reading Instruction Cycle



ADORE Reading Instruction Cycle (page 16)

Reading Instruction Cycle - support for the personal student reading concept and efficiency

Creating an inspirational reader environment

Interaction teacher-student - student-teacher

Analysis of students' needs

Goals defining

Selection of interesting materials / input points for reading

Implementation of activities

Monitoring students' achievement and outcomes

Application of diagnostic (formative) estimates

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Involving students in learning process planning

Reading

Students' involvement "into text"

Application of metacognitive strategies

Diagnostic / Formative Evaluation

(14) Good practice aimed at acquiring literacy competencies can be identified by the following indicators of active participation of RSP readers:





- Taking responsibility for choosing your own reading / learning goals and working at your own pace
- ownership of your own learning / reading assignment process
- Finding information and working with less teacher support
- actively engaging in the development of one's own understanding
- introducing elements of problem solving and making decisions from life
- use of research and problem-based methods of work
- the use of concrete materials and direct experience; tasks or learning process are important to students
- work in small groups.




Application of metacognitive strategies including:

- ✚ Activation of background knowledge
- ✚ Creating and Revising Predictions
- ✚ Summing up
- ✚ Forming mental images
- ✚ Asking questions
- ✚ Determining Importance
- ✚ Understanding the author's purpose

(15) The determinants that encourage the development of student reading competences:

- ✚ flexible use of space and time the availability of suitable teaching materials
- ✚ work outside the classroom and school
- ✚ approaches based on a certain degree of student autonomy
- ✚ the relationship of mutual respect between the teacher and the student
- ✚ opportunities for peer co-operation

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-  partnership with external instances
-  awareness of student needs
-  planning that is not strictly prescribed and defined.

In this context, the learning environment is viewed above the physical space in which learning takes place, including psychosocial and pedagogical features, as well as the influence of space and people outside the school.

4.2 Good practice components outside the teaching process

(15) Teacher Participation and Support to Principals

Collaboration between the principal and the teacher proved to be the central element of good practice. Even a small group of teachers will be able to install reading promotion programs if there are convincing concepts supported by the principal, encouraging others to participate. Such co-operation is crucial to sustaining the establishment of support programs. Participation of teachers must be located at the national, local and school level. According to our findings, during the field research work, it primarily covers two aspects: (1) motivation or commitment of teachers to promote reading that, for the implementation of support programs, typically requires the process from bottom to the top; and (2) a continuous (further) qualification for the transfer of reading literacy.

(16) Providing professional support to teachers - teacher training

Transfer of scientific knowledge into practice

The "diagnosis" of poor reading and evaluation of programs must be supported by scientific, expert and state-level, competent institutions. Since reasons for poor reading lie in so many different areas, help for RSP readers must also come from a network of diverse experts who support teachers. Reading projections at the national level must meet the psychometric standards that only qualified scientists can provide. Fundamental research into psychological, cognitive and other aspects of reading is considered to be progressive. On the contrary, RSP readers have a lot to compensate for. Even the best academic research does not help to improve the practice if the protagonists themselves do not have the necessary specific and didactic competencies. Until now, it is difficult to recognize the special qualifications

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of future teachers in reading and writing methods within the existing teacher training. The decisive principle is "literacy through the curriculum" - the development of reading literacy beyond the primary school, in all subjects (and all types of media). There are significant deficiencies in the relationship between educational sciences and educational practice. Systematic transfer of scientific expertise to educational practice or the transmission of concrete teaching problems to science is related to co-operation, narrow range and sustainability. On both sides of this transfer, competencies for developing good practice are essential. The most important driving force for the firm establishment of reading research must be its implementation in teacher training. Each teacher should study one or more modules on reading (and writing) regardless of the subjects they would be teaching later. This is an urgent but feasible task of medium-term education policy.

(17) Community Inclusion for School Support

In addition to professional support, schools also need the help of local educational institutions and private institutions. It seems necessary to convey the message that the adolescents' ability to read is a decisive precondition for their participation in work and public life. Therefore, the promotion of reading must be seen as a common task of politicians, local businesses, as well as foundations, citizen groups, and reading improvement networks.

(18) Legal and financial resources to support RSP readers

Good programs for the sustainable improvement of RSP readers need reliable and long-term calculable financial and human resources that will be secured only by statutory regulations. Only if students have the legal right to special programs, educational institutions will be obliged to allocate a substantial part of their budget to such measures. Otherwise, if on a voluntary basis, only short-term experiment projects would be funded. Upon their completion, all participants will be ready to return to old routines only.



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5. Syllabus for RSP readers



"No one who is struggling with reading literacy should be left to fight alone"

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Letter to the teacher

Are children born with natural repulsion to read? In no case. Small children are thrilled with books and are very happy to focus on them. When and where does the problem arise? Why do children lose interest in the book? What is the key moment? When does this book-loving child turn to someone who avoids it? We need to convince our students that reading is the skills that everyone can adopt, not the innate talent. All those involved in the children's education process often ask themselves the following question: Why do not they read it? Pupils are struggling with reading for various reasons, but in spite of this, it is specific that the intellectual abilities of students who oppose reading are average to above average. There are many explanations for the progressive separation of adolescents who are facing reading difficulties. Some of these separations can be attributed to developmental factors that accompany young people in the period between childhood and adulthood. Students may also lack the necessary skills and reading strategies to allow them access to texts that might otherwise interest them. Understanding the text, critical evaluation of texts, and the use of textbooks to teach the contents of all learning subjects become much more important in the middle than in elementary schools. The kind of reading literacy required is different at the level of skills profile, from one area to the other. For this reason, extensive knowledge of effective reading lessons is not only relevant to language teachers, but they all belong to the required professional qualifications of all teachers. In the following chapters, we are addressing you, dear colleagues, providing suggestions for texts and work methods that can be used to include reluctant, struggling and poor readers in re-discovering reading lessons. We will try to offer you the answer from a simple observation of a truly complex challenge: Understanding and countering the readers' reluctance.

Letter to students

Dear students,

When you claim not to read because you can not find the right book to read, which factors determine whether a particular book is "right"? Are all the books equally interesting to all students? How do adults help students find and read what is interesting to them? With these issues in mind, we welcome your participation in this program that will focus on your needs with the aim of improving your reading skills by helping you to overcome the lack of confidence in your own skills and lack of motivation. Once you realize that you have your own role in the education process, feel dedication and self-determination, it is less likely that you will continue to give up and likely be willing to continue to develop your skills even when you encounter difficulties. In order to achieve a common goal, we offer this program as a compilation of attractive textual materials that will meet your interests. Reading materials are your choice and our desire to work together and try to

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increase your reading interest and engagement, self-confidence and satisfaction with new reading competences.

5.1 Purpose of the program

Literacy is considered a key part of every man's right to education. The right to literacy in this program translates into the right to support - no person with literacy problems should struggle alone with this problem. Keeping in mind that the struggling readers form a diverse group, and a unique teaching strategy is not universally applicable, this program offers them a mixture of teaching strategies, appropriate levels of competence, in the way that they can benefit from it. This program focuses on teaching practices in public high schools and is based on the idea that the deficits of RSP readers require well-targeted, long-term teachers, school institutions, other competent institutions and educational policy makers. Its ultimate purpose is of a developmental character and in that sense, it is open to amendments and modifications, for which you are welcome. Our intention was to provide potential users with suggestions of textual materials and innovative methods that have been targeted to the development of student reading competences.

5.2 Programme description

This program focuses primarily on students aged 15 to 18, especially those who have been identified as RSP readers during our project activities. The program contains 21 teaching units, each based on the second reading source. Teaching units are innovative and motivating, for both students and their teachers (confirmed by project pilot activities). The selection of literary texts is based on the student's choice and is in line with the Selection Criteria document. Most of the teaching units, besides educational, also include different sociological, social, current-historical (migration themes) and cultural aspects of life in order to improve critical thinking in RSP readers. Work Methodologies, developed within the Project and proposed by this program, put innovative and unusual activities before and after reading in the center of attention, with a special emphasis on the pleasure during the reading process. Recognizing the need to prepare clear instructions and support in implementing strategies for better reading, together with psychological support for better motivation and readers' confidence, the offered combination of teaching strategies is adjusted to the RSP student-reader's ability. Metacognitive strategies, which provide students with tools for understanding and analyzing written texts, suggest the implementation of activities to raise motivation, practical experience and appropriate methods. The proposed activities will enable student interaction, stimulate their creativity, and ultimately help identify basic concepts of motivational texts. Students will develop and improve their understanding skills using metacognitive strategies before, during and

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after reading. Reading by RSP population often hampers obstacles that they cannot bypass themselves. They need help of competent persons, especially the help of professional teachers. However, very few secondary school teachers interviewed within the project activities possessed enough knowledge about the "diagnosis" of RSP readers and ways to increase reading literacy systematically. This worrying fact points to one of the major causes of ineffective reading lessons. Having this in mind, we have designed the program for high school teachers to provide guidelines for a new and different approach to reading lessons. Our wish is to give them inspiration and motivate them in everyday work with RSP readers.

5.3 Objectives

Identifying the needs of reluctant, struggling and poor readers, along with trying to improve their reading skills, help them strengthen their self confidence and faith in their capabilities, as well as supporting them in overcoming the lack of personal motivation, is a complex and challenging task. Changing the personal concept of RSP readers by immersing them into texts is the main goal of the activities proposed by this program. The programme will stimulate and develop RSP readers' capabilities in the following areas:

- ✚ improvement of communication skills, interpretation, analysis and evaluation skills,
- ✚ advancing and applying metacognitive skills,
- ✚ understanding and responding to literary texts of different forms from different countries and cultures,
- ✚ estimating various approaches by which writers realize the technique of writing literary works for achieving targeted effects on readers,
- ✚ surveys on reading contributions in understanding key areas of human interest,
- ✚ surveys of contributions to reading aesthetic, imaginative and intellectual growth and development of an individual,
- ✚ exploring new worlds with imagination,
- ✚ pleasure in reading experience,
- ✚ enjoyment in aesthetic values of language,
- ✚ developing awareness of new ways of perceiving the world,
- ✚ strengthening the ability to recognize and express emotions and feelings,
- ✚ enhancing student's self-esteem by discovering the ability to respond to the requirements,
- ✚ motivation to read in leisure time and out of the given school themes,

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- ✚ empathy development through the enjoyment of the voice and thought of the main protagonists,
- ✚ developing a critical thinking.

It will also help them to overcome obstacles in the following areas:

- ✚ text decoding,
- ✚ fluid and customizable reading,
- ✚ understanding of the read general and / or specific content,
- ✚ interpretation and evaluation of content,
- ✚ language,
- ✚ textual elements,
- ✚ metacognitive skills required for reading and / or learning,
- ✚ critical approach to reading and reflection,
- ✚ creation and use of communication contexts for the future implementation of reading activities in the circle of their families, among peers (collaborative learning) in school environment and leisure,
- ✚ motivation to improve reading skills and / or reading usage to improve learning,
- ✚ building a strong self-esteem as a reader,
- ✚ activating and changing views during reading (aesthetic versus eferent reader experience, Rosenblatt)

5.4 Outcomes

The engaging reading process possesses the potential of direct impact on readers' perspectives and attitudes, but also on emotions such as enjoyment and interest that can ultimately be considered a positive reading outcome. In addition, active reading also refers to the reaction process itself to the text content. This cognitive and social aspect of participation focuses on the nature of the understanding process as an integral part of effective reading. The reader can understand the text message and give it a personal answer. Such involvement is always the case when students are allowed to elaborate their personal answers and views on a particular text in co-operation with peers and teachers. Such practice has a positive impact on the motivation of reading, enabling students to take advantage of their autonomy and the ability to think with ultimate impact on the development of self-regulation capacity.

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Successful readers will acquire the skills of lifelong learning and ability:

- ✚ detailed knowledge of the content and forms of literary texts from different countries and cultures,
- ✚ applying strategies of understanding during reading activities, which will make it more aware and strategic,
- ✚ submissions of competent personal answers on the subject of the literary works that they have studied,
- ✚ creating and sharing their opinion on the text backed up by relevant arguments,
- ✚ analyzing texts by taking different perspectives,
- ✚ comparing with the texts they read before, as well as their real life,
- ✚ expressing their feelings when reading and sharing it with their peers, parents, teachers,
- ✚ a developed understanding of literal and implicit meaning, relevant context and deeper topics and attitudes expressed in literary works,
- ✚ research of broader and universal questions suggested through literary works,
- ✚ reading, interpreting and evaluating the literary texts of different countries and cultures,
- ✚ developed empathy and a better understanding of themselves and the world around them,
- ✚ an understanding of multicultural themes and phenomena beyond the Western European literary and civilization circle,
- ✚ a clear critical / analytical understanding of the author's intentions and attitudes expressed in the literary text,
- ✚ engagement on the author's ideas and the way of dealing with themes with influence on the formation of broader contexts,
- ✚ ability to submit a competent personal response on the way the language works in the texts.

5.5 Valuation and self-evaluation

In practice, there is still a widespread emphasis on the results and performance of the students in the tests and important experiences are considered the ones that lead to improved test results. The pressure of the examination leads to the teachers being responsible for curriculum content coverage so they focus on that task instead on the student learning experiences with the curriculum. It is also the consequence of a fast pace of teaching where the content is highly structured with a focus on teaching rather than learning, whereby teachers decide on the goals of teaching in advance. If teaching objectives require students to solve certain problems, and exams check for information

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retrieval, students will not try to achieve more goals because they do not seem to appreciate it. While moving attention from external testing to monitoring and evaluating learning, it is important to focus on what students are doing instead of what teachers are doing and redirect focus from the product to the performance and learning process. An important determinant of successful reading lessons include its monitoring and evaluation where the emphasis is placed on three types of evaluation as the most appropriate for RSP readers:

1. **Formative valuation** implies a constant questioning and seeking of effective solutions, as a common act of pupils and teachers, which lead to positive action. In this process, it is necessary to proceed from what the student knows and can because success as a motivation is very important to the RSP student-reader and allows him/her to build a positive image of him/herself. In a *formative valuation*, the goal is to improve the student's success in finding work-related difficulties or errors in order to provide hints for improvement, which has elements and a kind of diagnostic evaluation. In the formative evaluation, the contents and processes of future learning and teaching plans are proposed and shaped. It is a learning evaluation and it provides feedback to students and teachers about current performances, achievements, strengths and weaknesses in a form that clearly points out what a student or teacher needs to do to improve, maximize, or extend learning and achievement. The purpose of the formative evaluation is the actual feedback, i.e. how far did the student get in his intentions, and how big was the gap between the desired and the accomplished, the reasons why and what is the gap between the actual and the ideal performance like. Feedback given to the student, about any segment of his/her work, supports his/her learning, including clear and directly stated reasons for certain grade, constructive and relevant advice, attitudes of the teacher offering help and positive tone, encouraging students to self-evaluation and conversation. It also includes a specific description of the room for improvement and takes account of timely feedback. Appropriate feedback helps students to move forward, plan, adapt, reflect on their learning and thus practice self-regulation in a real and balanced way. Hattie and Yates (2013) argue that feedback is effective if students know how successful they look if their goal is to reduce discrepancies between where they are now and where they should be and focus on providing information to students about the next step. It is important to establish a positive and friendly atmosphere of active learning, based on mutual respect and trust. Formative valuation should be an integrated part of the reading lesson in order to change the practice in the sense that students and teachers look at evaluation as a source of help and insight instead of the opportunity to assign rewards and punishments. In order to evaluate the students properly, Grabinger and Dunlap (1995) cite two components of assessment: skills specification and prescribed support. If the teacher cannot support a certain skill, it cannot be equally evaluated. For this reason, one of the basic tasks of a teacher is to specify the skills and performance of

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students that can be supported in order to increase the student's abilities, taking into account the area of approximate development. As a good starting point, the skills of project management, research skills, organizational skills and visual skills (textual, audio, visual), exposure skills and reflection skills are emphasized. Feedback on the assessment is an integral part of the learning process and provides useful information for planning future learning activities. It also includes teacher's observation, interviews, questionnaires, focus groups, and analysis of documents and student papers.

2. Authentic valuation

The growing trend of closer approximation of real-life evaluation, using real evidence of actual situations instead of substitute performance indicators such as tests. *Authentic valuation* refers to the assessment of the real world, what people actually do instead of using simple answers to questions. What makes authentic evaluation is that everyone knows what students can really do in real life with the knowledge, skills and competences they have achieved. Authentic valuation is used for the actual tasks that students need to include during class rather than using thoughtful tasks or test sheets compiled for evaluation purposes. Authentic tasks imply a wide range of performances: oral presentations, collections of written and other products, problem solving, recordings / footage of experiments, debates, researches, individual and group projects, observation of teachers and the portfolio of student work and learning. This type of evaluation requires a high level of teacher competence. It is difficult to develop and it is a great challenge for teachers because they are mostly accustomed to relying on externally developed assessments. The *Portfolio*⁴ stands out as an ideal form of authentic evaluation, where teaching and evaluation are in consensus.

3. Self-evaluation

One of the important goals of modern education and training for self-assessment students is in line with the development of a complete personality, including all the potentials and individual characteristics of each individual student (Anđelković and Stanisavljević-Petrović, 2011). Self-assessment enables students to make decisions independently and assume responsibility for achieving success and encourages them to better organize and plan their work. The role of

⁴ A collection of student activities that point to student achievements over a longer period and within a different contexts, and helps teachers monitor individual student progress by showing the initial state and further development of knowledge and skills and clearly shows student's achievements. The student portfolio can be in the form of diaries, folders or web pages (electronic or e-portfolio). The Digital Portfolio is a multimedia collection of student's work that provides evidence of student's knowledge and skills. It can contain different types of works: projects, reports, essays, assignments, reflexive writing, self-assessment, exam materials, homework, class works.



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teachers in supporting pupils in this process is important, motivating them and pointing to the independent and continuous monitoring of their own success and progress. Self-regulation feedback highlights the ways students plan, control, direct and regulate actions to increase self-esteem skills and self-confidence in engaging in tasks. Such feedback is the most powerful for improving students' learning.

Summative Evaluation

Negative consequences of summative assessments and tests with RSP readers:

- ✚ reducing their self-confidence, which further reduces their work and self-image about themselves,
- ✚ a shift towards performance goals instead of learning goals, associated with less active and superficial learning strategies,
- ✚ creating an anxiety test that affects students differently,
- ✚ assessment of pupils value, from their perspectives and perspectives of others, based on test achievements instead of wider personal achievements,
- ✚ limiting their learning learning opportunities by focusing on what is being tested and on methods that favor certain learning approaches.

Table 1. Traditional methods of assessment versus activity-based estimation method⁵

Traditional Methods of Assessment	Activity-Based Assessment Methods
Periodically summative in order to determine what the students know and do not know at a given time point.	Formative part of the teaching process.
Decontinued tasks or tasks based on class.	Evaluated authentic tasks are applied in practice and are relevant to real life.
They encourage memorizing the correct answers.	They encourage divergent thinking in designing possible answers.
The goal is to measure the acquisition of knowledge.	The goal is to improve the development of significant skills.
The curriculum directs the assessment.	The assessment directs the curriculum.
Emphasis on developing the amount of knowledge.	Emphasis on securing skills in real life tasks.

⁵ Retrieved and adapted from McGrath i MacEwan, 2011, 270

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Provides a onetime record of student's understanding.	Complex authentic tasks that students need to explore over a long period of time.
It emphasizes competition.	Authentic tasks provide the possibility of collaboration.
Aim on simple skills or tasks in a concrete, unambiguous form.	Prepare students for the ambiguities and exceptions that can be found in the context of real life.
Similar answers are expected from students.	Authentic tasks allow a variety of outcomes.
Reflection is not always required.	Reflection, self-assessment and performance interpretation are fully integrated into the tasks.

5.6 Syllabus for RSP readers - methodology






Selected literary texts with relevant methodologies and materials for teaching can be found at:

<http://handbook4rspreaders.org/hr/projektne-rezultati/2-prirucnik/izabrane-price.html>

5.7 Strategies and Methods

When choosing the method of work, we took into consideration and emphasized the following: the significance of the student's previous knowledge, beliefs, concepts (perceptions) and misapprehensions; paying attention to student's metacognitive and self-regulating skills and knowledge; negotiating and exchanging opinions through discussions and different forms of cooperation; the use of many different views / representations of concepts and information; teaching methods that take into account the situational nature of learning and thus integrate the acquisition and application of knowledge and the need to develop methods of assessment that are based on learning processes; authentic tasks; individual orientation of students who encourage metacognitive skills.

Relevant reading strategies that we apply have been categorized into three groups: (1) Before reading: includes clarification of reading goals, quick or segmented reading of texts for the acquisition of general information and activation of prior knowledge. (2) During reading: includes the definition of the main ideas, the conclusion, the anticipation and the follow-up of understanding. (3) After reading: includes a summary, drawing conclusions, self-explanatory questions for understanding and reviewing the level of understanding of the text.

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In the reading activity phase, the following are used:

Model construction: Learning = individual sense creation

- ✚ Students are involved in active participation, examination and research.
- ✚ Students are involved in activities to develop understanding and create personal meaning through reflection.
- ✚ Student's work is the proof of conceptual understanding, not just recalling of/remembering.
- ✚ Students apply knowledge in contexts of real life.
- ✚ Students are facing a challenging curriculum designed to develop a deeper understanding.

The teacher uses different student experiences to create effective learning. He/she requests from students to think about reading, explaining how to solve problems, think about their reading difficulties.

In the stages before and after the reading, the following is used:

Model of Co-Construction: Learning = Creating Knowledge with Others

- ✚ Students work together to improve their knowledge.
- ✚ Students help each other to learn through the conversation.
- ✚ Learning objectives are emerging and developing during the examination / research.
- ✚ Students create products for each other and for others.
- ✚ Students approach sources outside the class community.
- ✚ Pupils consider the best ways to support community learning.
- ✚ The students demonstrate an understanding of how group processes improve their learning.
- ✚ Social class structures promote interdependence. Students show public / social responsibility, including classroom management.
- ✚ Evaluation tasks are common products that show increased complexity and rich network of ideas.

5.8 Teachers' Preparation - Guidelines for Work

To work with students belonging to RSP readers group, the following is suggested:

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1. At the beginning of the first grade of secondary school, check the reading skills, examine how much students are motivated to read and how much they want to read (talk, poll, etc.).
2. Always go for students' affinity and topics they are interested in. Respect their thinking and encourage them to suggest activities that hold reading incentives.
3. Collect information about what the students are interested in, what they like and what they want to read.
4. Offer a wide range of texts beyond the curriculum and provide help with the selection of texts.
5. Offer contemporary texts as the initial stimulus and motivation to read mandatory texts.
6. Talk to students about the difficulties they encounter while reading and how individual approaches can be applied.
7. Work on shorter texts of various types and contemporary themes.
8. Given the need for adolescents to negotiate, it is wise to incorporate texts who develop and nurture critical literacy.
9. In the process of teaching, create correlations, i.e. interconnect the additional material (video, film, etc.) with what is being read.
10. Introduce more activities aimed at raising awareness of reading and its importance in education and life.
11. Take small steps to teach students metacognitive strategies.
12. Record activities and difficulties that hinder students from reading.
13. Observe and encourage the development and progress of students.
14. Continually give students feedback on their progress in accordance with the action plan tailored to individuals.
15. Focus on self-tuning, prepare, direct and guide students towards self-evaluation.
16. Tests may serve as examples to prepare questions for reading comprehension.
17. Use imagination and creativity to prepare reading texts.
18. Adjust the texts set by the national curriculum to the needs of students and what they are interested in.
19. Organize reading workshops.
20. Include people who are a role model for students when it comes to reading (teachers, parents, public figures, and classmates).
21. Encourage reading aloud.
22. Students can do their job successfully in raising a reading criteria scale, through collaborative or peer learning.
23. Organize work in smaller groups (4-5).
24. Offer informal forms of work on texts, e.g. comics, art and kinetic activities.
25. Teaching hours are organized outside the classroom, even outside the school.

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26. Refresh the school libraries for titles directed to RSP readers.
27. Involve students in the work of libraries when purchasing literature.
28. Keep in mind that it is crucial to present the book in an attractive way. Adolescents will not do something that is not “cool”.
29. Apply a variety of innovative methods whenever possible.
30. Help the student create his/her own image of him/herself as a good reader.
31. Move the boundaries, disrupt misapprehensions and prejudices, bridge obstacles - social, cultural, economic (for example, prejudices about migrant students).
32. Increase the exchange of professional knowledge, skills and information.
33. Develop close co-operation with parents as people who can act positively and influence that students read in free time.

6. Self-Evaluation of Students and Teachers

For the successful assessment, evaluation and self-evaluation of students and teachers we propose the following questionnaires:

1. **Initial Questionnaire**⁶ is available on http://handbook4rspreaders.org/files/Reading-habits-questionnaire_f.pdf
2. **Questionnaire for student's self-assessment**

QUESTIONNAIRE FOR RELUCTANT, STRUGGLING AND POOR READERS

1. Age: _____
2. Sex: (circle)
 - a) M
 - b) F
3. School you are attending: (circle)
 - a) elementary school
 - b) gymnasium
4. Overall success at the end of the previous school year: _____

⁶ Used to carry out a project survey to examine the reader's habits of RSP readers group. The survey was conducted in November and December 2016.

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5. Are you involved in extracurricular activities at school? (circle)

a) YES

b) NO

If yes, which one?

6. Are you involved in activities outside the school (clubs, associations) ? (circle)

a) YES

b) NO

If yes, which one(s)?

7. On a scale from 1 to 5 (1 - disagree, 2 - mostly disagree, 3 – neither disagree nor agree, 4 - mostly agree, 5 - agree), please determine the level of agreement / disagreements with the claims set out below. For each sentence, circle a number that matches your answer.

At the class:

1. I formulate (think, set up) my own learning objectives. 1 2 3 4 5

2. I think about my own ideas and their meaning. 1 2 3 4 5

3. I develop my own style (way) of learning. 1 2 3 4 5

4. I estimate how much time I will spend on the given activity. 1 2 3 4 5

5. I take responsibility for my own learning. 1 2 3 4 5

6. I evaluate (estimate, assess, determine, monitor, measure) my progress and achievements. 1 2 3 4 5

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- | | |
|--|-----------|
| 7. I argue (explain) and document (record) my progress and achievements. | 1 2 3 4 5 |
| 8. I pay attention to the ideas of other students. | 1 2 3 4 5 |
| 9. I ask other students to explain their ideas. | 1 2 3 4 5 |
| 10. We explain and share ideas among each others. | 1 2 3 4 5 |
| 11. I try to understand the meaning of the ideas of other students. | 1 2 3 4 5 |
| 12. I talk to other students about different ways to solve the problem. | 1 2 3 4 5 |
| 13. Students decide on issues of mutual interest (eg about excursions, excursions, projects, the look of the classroom ...). | 1 2 3 4 5 |
| 14. Develop decision-making and teamwork skills. | 1 2 3 4 5 |
| 15. Students choose the theme of project activities. | 1 2 3 4 5 |
| 16. Assessments are a common decision of teachers and students where anyone can make their own comment or inquiry. | 1 2 3 4 5 |
| 17. Teachers encourage me to think about what I have learned before. | 1 2 3 4 5 |
| 18. Teachers encourage me to wonder if what I have learned in the past is important for further learning. | 1 2 3 4 5 |
| 19. I link previous knowledge with life and solving problems. | 1 2 3 4 5 |
| 20 I have the opportunity to learn what I'm interested in. | 1 2 3 4 5 |

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- | | |
|---|-----------|
| 21. Teachers know and respect the living conditions and circumstances of a particular student. | 1 2 3 4 5 |
| 22. Teachers include students in planning the school's teaching and life. | 1 2 3 4 5 |
| 23. Teachers help students discover independently how to learn the best. | 1 2 3 4 5 |
| 24. A starting points are the wishes and interests of the students. | 1 2 3 4 5 |
| 25. The class ends with the student's interest in further work and learning. | 1 2 3 4 5 |
| 26. Teachers ask students about their experiences / previous knowledge in the learning process. | 1 2 3 4 5 |
| 27. Teachers respect individual students' differences. | 1 2 3 4 5 |
| 28. I think about my learning. | 1 2 3 4 5 |
| 29. I explain how I solve problems. | 1 2 3 4 5 |
| 30. I'm discussing my learning difficulties. | 1 2 3 4 5 |
| 31. I try new ways of learning. | 1 2 3 4 5 |
| 32. I discuss how I learn. | 1 2 3 4 5 |
| 33. I discuss how I think while I'm learning. | 1 2 3 4 5 |
| 34. I am discussing different ways of learning. | 1 2 3 4 5 |
| 35. I discuss how well am I learning. | 1 2 3 4 5 |
| 36. I think about how to become a better student and to improve / improve my learning. | 1 2 3 4 5 |

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37. I take into account my thoughts and feelings, 1 2 3 4 5
taking into account mindfulness and thoughts.

38. A positive correlation and shared responsibility 1 2 3 4 5
are promoted.

39. I apply knowledge in contexts of real life. 1 2 3 4 5

40. Learning objectives are linked to the methods 1 2 3 4 5
of evaluation (grades).

41. I seek the most effective ways of supporting 1 2 3 4 5
community learning (partnership).

With grades 1 to 5 (1 - disagree, 2 - mostly disagree, 3 – neither disagree nor agree, 4 - mostly agree, 5 - agree), please, assess the level of agreement / disagreement with the following statements regarding the learning environment in your school:

In my classroom / school:

1. The classroom has a look and atmosphere of 1 2 3 4 5
the living space (e.g. flowers, aquarium, pictures /
photos, personal collections, carpets, armchairs,
curtains, etc.).

2. The space is enriched with the student work. 1 2 3 4 5

3. There is enough space to move around. 1 2 3 4 5

4. Places for special forms of student work are 1 2 3 4 5
provided.

5. The atmosphere is challenging and tempting. 1 2 3 4 5

6. The learning environment is nice and cosy. 1 2 3 4 5

7. The environment helps students to be 1 2 3 4 5
reflective / encouraged to think.

8. It is at my disposal all that is needed for 1 2 3 4 5
independent learning and work.

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9. My participation in learning is supported. 1 2 3 4 5

10. A warm and positive atmosphere is supported and developed. 1 2 3 4 5

11. The development of creative work strategies and creativity is encouraged. 1 2 3 4 5

12. Multisensor experiences: different senses (vision, hearing, touch, flair) and combining words, images, sounds, gestures, movements (multimodality of the environment) are encouraged. 1 2 3 4 5

13. Students' experiences and interests are taken into account. 1 2 3 4 5

14. Different modes of expression and different styles (ways) of learning are possible and encouraged. 1 2 3 4 5

9With grades 1 to 5 (1 - disagree, 2 - mostly disagree, 3 - neither disagree, nor agree, 4 - mostly agree, 5 - agree), please assess the level of agreement / disagreement with the following learning-related allegations:

At the class:

1. It starts with the basic and initial (previous) knowledge of the student. 1 2 3 4 5

2. Applying knowledge is focused on critical, creative and practical thinking. 1 2 3 4 5

3. Integration is applied (linking ideas, people, living areas). 1 2 3 4 5

4. We learn about ourselves and others (the human dimension is taken into account). 1 2 3 4 5

5. Careful attention is paid to improve the learning (developing new feelings, interests, 1 2 3 4 5

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values).

6. Learning on how to learn, how to organize your learning (learning to learn) is promoted. 1 2 3 4 5

7. Learning is taught by doing (practical exercises and exercises). 1 2 3 4 5

8. The students are personally involved in learning (cognitive and emotional in the learning event). 1 2 3 4 5

9. Learning is self-initiated (initiated by students). 1 2 3 4 5

10. Learning is experiential, pervasive and creative. 1 2 3 4 5

11. Students participate in the judgment of the quality of learning. 1 2 3 4 5

Please rate with grades 1 to 5 (1 - never, 2 - rarely, 3 - sometimes 4 - frequently, 5 - always) how frequent the strategies, methods, procedures and forms of work listed below are used in your school:

In my class, the following strategies, methods, procedures, forms of teaching work are encouraged:

1. Learning by discovery and exploration (e.g. problem teaching, creative tasks, project teaching, simulation). 1 2 3 4 5

2. Creative learning techniques (e.g. ideas storming, expression through creative media (music, pictures), open end activities, six hats). 1 2 3 4 5

3. Active writing and essays/paper works (e.g. writing, daily and weekly learning plan, learning diary, portfolio of students' papers and learning). 1 2 3 4 5

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|---|-----------|
| 4. Case studies (analysis of concrete examples from practice). | 1 2 3 4 5 |
| 5. Individual work (standalone work). | 1 2 3 4 5 |
| 6. Work in pairs. | 1 2 3 4 5 |
| 7. Work in groups. | 1 2 3 4 5 |
| 8. Integrative teaching and learning (linking different subjects and topics to the whole). | 1 2 3 4 5 |
| 9. Practical methods (e.g. method of practical work, performance experiments). | 1 2 3 4 5 |
| 10. Visual methods (e.g. demonstration method, drawing, method of making and interpreting the mental maps). | 1 2 3 4 5 |
| 11. The method of programmed learning / teaching (gradual progression in learning, from easier to a more difficult level). | 1 2 3 4 5 |
| 12. The method of exemplary learning (work based on a good example). | 1 2 3 4 5 |
| 13. The strategy of experiencing and expressing the experience (reception of artwork, interpretation and reproduction, creation). | 1 2 3 4 5 |
| 14. Learning through movements (e.g. kinesthetic style of learning, creative dance). | 1 2 3 4 5 |
| 15. Mentoring work strategy (enhanced independent work of students under the guidance and supervision of teachers). | 1 2 3 4 5 |
| 16. Teamwork strategy, collaborative / cooperative learning. | 1 2 3 4 5 |

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17. Peer teaching (e.g. students teach each other, tutoring). 1 2 3 4 5

18. Out-of-school, field work (classes outside the classroom, excursions, excursions). 1 2 3 4 5

19. The method of moral education: moral learning (acceptable and unacceptable behavior). 1 2 3 4 5

20 Learning supported by computer. 1 2 3 4 5

With grades 1 through 5 (1 - not represented, 2 - mostly not represented, 3 - neither represented nor not represented, 4 - mostly represented, 5 - represented), please estimate the level of representation of the mentioned teaching outcomes:

The school classes are represented by:

1. transferring or mediating knowledge (knowledge transmission) 1 2 3 4 5

2. Encouraging and monitoring the learning process 1 2 3 4 5

3. Managed Activities (activities led by teachers) 1 2 3 4 5

4. free activities (activities conducted by students) 1 2 3 4 5

5. productive activities (meaningful learning) 1 2 3 4 5

6. Simple activities (quickly resolved, light) 1 2 3 4 5

7. complex activities (it takes more time and effort to resolve) 1 2 3 4 5

8. verbal learning (learning through oral presentation, conversation) 1 2 3 4 5

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9. Practical learning (applying knowledge on a concrete example) 1 2 3 4 5

10. convergent opinion (logical conclusion, search for the correct solution) 1 2 3 4 5

11. divergent thinking (creating new ideas, enjoying the search process - the more accurate solutions) 1 2 3 4 5

12. Different teaching aids 1 2 3 4 5

13. Teacher's activity 1 2 3 4 5

14. Student's activity 1 2 3 4 5

With grades 1 to 5 (1 - disagree, 2 - mostly disagree, 3 – neither disagree nor agree, 4 - mostly agree, 5 - agree), please assess the level of agreement / disagreement with the following statements on obstacles to active learning:

The obstacles to active learning on teaching classes are:

1. the existing structure and culture of the school (how the school is organized and what kind of relationships are within it) 1 2 3 4 5

2. Teachers' insecurity 1 2 3 4 5

3. Unpreparedness of the students 1 2 3 4 5

4. Insufficient school equipment 1 2 3 4 5

5. Lack of time (content coverage) 1 2 3 4 5

6. It requires too much time and effort 1 2 3 4 5

7. Class size (number of students in class, size of classroom) 1 2 3 4 5

8. Non-observance of class rules 1 2 3 4 5

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9. Lack of knowledge, skills and competences
of teachers in this area 1 2 3 4 5

10. Other active learning obstacles not
mentioned: 1 2 3 4 5

Evaluate the development of the following skills, abilities and competencies of your teachers
on an assessment scale from 1 to 5 (1 - underdeveloped, 2 - mostly underdeveloped, 3 -
neither underdeveloped nor developed, 4 - mostly developed, 5 - developed)

My teachers possess knowledge, skills and abilities (competences):

1. in the field of the methodology of teaching
curriculum building (planning, designing and
testing of teaching / content) 1 2 3 4 5

2. in the area of organization and management
of the educational process (teaching classes) 1 2 3 4 5

3. in the field of determining students'
achievement at school (students' assessment) 1 2 3 4 5

4. in the area of classroom atmosphere creating
(giving support to students, taking account of
student's work overload, relationships within the
class, student's success) 1 2 3 4 5

5. in the area of parental partnerships with
parents (co-operation with parents) 1 2 3 4 5

6. Pedagogical-psychological competences
(focusing on age, abilities, opportunities,
desires and needs of students) 1 2 3 4 5

7. Didactic-methodical competences (aimed at
better organization of teaching and learning) 1 2 3 4 5

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8. Professional competences (the teacher can explain and know the contents of the subject) 1 2 3 4 5

9. Personal competences (teacher is available, honest, just, interesting, positive) 1 2 3 4 5

10. Competences of facilitation (guiding, directing, supporting and encouraging learning) 1 2 3 4 5

11. competences in the field of work with others (cooperate with other teachers and are willing to help and share their knowledge) 1 2 3 4 5

12. Competences for knowledge, technology and information (they are well-versed in teaching, they can use technology) 1 2 3 4 5

13. Competences for working in community and for community (contributing to the preparation of students for their role of responsible citizens, encouraging understanding and appreciation of other religions and cultures, working with parents of parents and with the local community) 1 2 3 4 5

14. The competences of lifelong education and the elimination of obstacles to the application of active learning 1 2 3 4 5

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3. Self-assessment questionnaire for teachers⁷

QUESTIONNAIRE FOR TEACHERS

1. Age: (circle)

a) up to 35 years b) 36 to 45 years c) more than 46 years

2. Gender: (circle)

a) M b) F

3. School you work in: (circle)

c) Elementary school b) Gymnasium

4. Out of the listed below, circle the educational area (according to NOK) and the subject you teach:

a) Linguistic-communication area subject: _____

b) Mathematical subject subject: _____

c) Natural sciences subject: _____

d) Technical and informative subject matter: _____

e) Socio-humanistic subject matter: _____

f) Art subject area: _____

g) Physical and Health Subject: _____

5. Years of Work: (circle)

a) Up to 10 years b) 11 to 20 years c) 21 to 30 years d) 31 years and over

6. Have you been involved in professional training in the field of active learning?

a) YES b) NO

If YES, in which form of professional training did you participate? (circle one or more answers)

a) the Council of Teachers

b) expert meetings of the Education and Training Agency

⁷ Questionnaires are retrieved and adapted from the PhD dissertation; Gazibara, Senka, Aktivno učenje kao didaktičko-metodička paradigma suvremene nastave.

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- c) participation in professional and scientific symposiums and conferences
- d) Participation in projects related to active learning in the organization of other institutions (e.g. MZOS, EU Projects, HRZZ)
- e) independently studying literature
- f) something else: _____
- g) I have not participated in professional training in the field of active learning

On a scale from 1 to 5 (1 - disagree, 2 - mostly disagree, 3 – neither disagree nor agree, 4 - mostly agree, 5 - agree), please estimate the level of agreement / disagreement with the claims

In reading lessons:

- | | |
|--|-----------|
| 1. Students formulate (design, set up) their own learning objectives. | 1 2 3 4 5 |
| 2. Students are thinking about their own ideas and their meaning. | 1 2 3 4 5 |
| 3. Students develop their own style (learning). | 1 2 3 4 5 |
| 4. Students evaluate how much time they will spend on the given activity. | 1 2 3 4 5 |
| 5. Students take responsibility for their own learning. | 1 2 3 4 5 |
| 6. Students evaluate (assess, evaluate, determine, monitor, measure) their progress and achievement. | 1 2 3 4 5 |
| 7. The students argue (explain) and document (record) their own progress and achievements. | 1 2 3 4 5 |
| 8. Students pay attention to the ideas of other students. | 1 2 3 4 5 |
| 9. The students ask other students to explain their ideas. | 1 2 3 4 5 |

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- | | |
|--|-----------|
| 10. The students explain and share their ideas with each other. | 1 2 3 4 5 |
| 11. Students are trying to understand the meaning of the ideas of other students. | 1 2 3 4 5 |
| 12. Students talk to other students about different ways to solve the problem. | 1 2 3 4 5 |
| 13. Students decide on issues of mutual interest (e.g. about excursions, projects, the look of the classroom ...). | 1 2 3 4 5 |
| 14. Students develop decision-making and teamwork skills. | 1 2 3 4 5 |
| 15. Students choose the theme of project activities. | 1 2 3 4 5 |
| 16. Assessments are a common decision of teachers and students where anyone can make their own comment or inquiry. | 1 2 3 4 5 |
| 17. I encourage students to think about what they have learned before. | 1 2 3 4 5 |
| 18. I encourage students to wonder if what they have learned in the past is important for further learning. | 1 2 3 4 5 |
| 19. Students connect prior knowledge with life and problem solving. | 1 2 3 4 5 |
| 20. Students have the opportunity to learn what they are interested in. | 1 2 3 4 5 |
| 21. I know and respect the living conditions and circumstances of a particular student. | 1 2 3 4 5 |
| 22. I involve students in planning the school's teaching and life. | 1 2 3 4 5 |

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- | | |
|--|-----------|
| 23. I help students to find out how to learn in a best way. | 1 2 3 4 5 |
| 24. Starting points in teaching planning are wishes and interests of the students. | 1 2 3 4 5 |
| 25. The class ends with the student's interest in further work and learning. | 1 2 3 4 5 |
| 26. I ask students about their experiences / previous knowledge in the learning process. | 1 2 3 4 5 |
| 27. I respect the individual differences of the students. | 1 2 3 4 5 |
| 28. Students are thinking about their learning. | 1 2 3 4 5 |
| 29. Students explain how to solve problems. | 1 2 3 4 5 |
| 30. Students discuss their learning difficulties | 1 2 3 4 5 |
| 31. Students try out new ways of learning. | 1 2 3 4 5 |
| 32. Students discuss how to learn. | 1 2 3 4 5 |
| 33. Students discuss how they think while they learn. | 1 2 3 4 5 |
| 34. Students discuss different learning modes. | 1 2 3 4 5 |
| 35. Students discuss how well they learn. | 1 2 3 4 5 |
| 36. Students are thinking about how to become better learners and to improve / enhance their learning. | 1 2 3 4 5 |
| 37. Students take into account their thoughts and feelings, while respecting the thoughts and feelings of others | 1 2 3 4 5 |

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| 38. A positive relationships and shared responsibilities are promoted. | 1 2 3 4 5 |
| 39. Students apply knowledge in contexts of real life. | 1 2 3 4 5 |
| 40. Learning objectives are linked to the methods of evaluation (assessment). | 1 2 3 4 5 |
| 41. Students are seeking the most effective ways of supporting community learning (partnership). | 1 2 3 4 5 |

With grades 1 to 5 (1 - disagree, 2 - mostly disagree, 3 - neither disagree, nor agree, 4 - mostly agree, 5 - agree), please assess the level of agreement / disagreement with the following learning-related allegations:

At the class:

- | | |
|--|-----------|
| 1. It starts with the basic and initial (previous) knowledge of the student. | 1 2 3 4 5 |
| 2. Applying knowledge is focused on critical, creative and practical thinking. | 1 2 3 4 5 |
| 3. Integration is applied (linking ideas, people, living areas). | 1 2 3 4 5 |
| 4. We learn about ourselves and others (the human dimension is taken into account). | 1 2 3 4 5 |
| 5. Careful attention is paid to improve the learning (developing new feelings, interests, values). | 1 2 3 4 5 |
| 6. Learning on how to learn, how to organize your learning (learning to learn) is promoted. | 1 2 3 4 5 |
| 7. Learning is taught by doing (practical exercises and exercises). | 1 2 3 4 5 |

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8. The students are personally involved in learning (cognitive and emotional in the learning event). 1 2 3 4 5

9. Learning is self-initiated (initiated by students). 1 2 3 4 5

10. Learning is experiential, pervasive and creative. 1 2 3 4 5

11. Students participate in the judgment of the quality of learning. 1 2 3 4 5

Please rate with grades 1 to 5 (1 - never, 2 - rarely, 3 - sometimes 4 - frequently, 5 - always) how frequent the strategies, methods, procedures and forms of work listed below are used in your school:

In my class, I encourage the following strategies, methods, procedures, forms of teaching work:

1. Learning by discovery and exploration (e.g. problem teaching, creative tasks, project teaching, simulation). 1 2 3 4 5

2. Creative learning techniques (e.g. ideas storming, expression through creative media (music, pictures), open end activities, six hats). 1 2 3 4 5

3. Active writing and essays/paper works (e.g. writing, daily and weekly learning plan, learning diary, portfolio of students' papers and learning). 1 2 3 4 5

4. Case studies (analysis of concrete examples from practice). 1 2 3 4 5

5. Individual work (standalone work). 1 2 3 4 5

6. Work in pairs. 1 2 3 4 5

7. Work in groups. 1 2 3 4 5

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- | | |
|---|-----------|
| 8. Integrative teaching and learning (linking different subjects and topics to the whole). | 1 2 3 4 5 |
| 9. Practical methods (e.g. method of practical work, performance experiments). | 1 2 3 4 5 |
| 10. Visual methods (e.g. demonstration method, drawing, method of making and interpreting the mental maps). | 1 2 3 4 5 |
| 11. The method of programmed learning / teaching (gradual progression in learning, from easier to a more difficult level). | 1 2 3 4 5 |
| 12. The method of exemplary learning (work based on a good example). | 1 2 3 4 5 |
| 13. The strategy of experiencing and expressing the experience (reception of artwork, interpretation and reproduction, creation). | 1 2 3 4 5 |
| 14. Learning through movements (e.g. kinesthetic style of learning, creative dance). | 1 2 3 4 5 |
| 15. Mentoring work strategy (enhanced independent work of students under the guidance and supervision of teachers). | 1 2 3 4 5 |
| 16. Teamwork strategy, collaborative / cooperative learning. | 1 2 3 4 5 |
| 17. Peer teaching (e.g. students teach each other, tutoring). | 1 2 3 4 5 |
| 18. Out-of-school, field work (classes outside the classroom, excursions, excursions). | 1 2 3 4 5 |
| 19. The method of moral education: moral learning (acceptable and unacceptable behavior). | 1 2 3 4 5 |
| 20 Learning supported by computer. | 1 2 3 4 5 |

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With grades 1 through 5 (1 - not represented, 2 - mostly not represented, 3 - neither represented nor not represented, 4 - mostly represented, 5 - represented), please estimate the level of representation of the mentioned teaching outcomes:

The school classes are represented by:

- | | |
|--|-----------|
| 1. transferring or mediating knowledge
(knowledge transmission) | 1 2 3 4 5 |
| 2. Encouraging and monitoring the learning
process | 1 2 3 4 5 |
| 3. Managed Activities (activities led by
teachers) | 1 2 3 4 5 |
| 4. free activities (activities conducted by
students) | 1 2 3 4 5 |
| 5. productive activities (meaningful learning) | 1 2 3 4 5 |
| 6. Simple activities (quickly resolved, light) | 1 2 3 4 5 |
| 7. complex activities (it takes more time and
effort to resolve) | 1 2 3 4 5 |
| 8. verbal learning (learning through oral
presentation, conversation) | 1 2 3 4 5 |
| 9. Practical learning (applying knowledge on a
concrete example) | 1 2 3 4 5 |
| 10. convergent opinion (logical conclusion,
search for the correct solution) | 1 2 3 4 5 |
| 11. divergent thinking (creating new ideas,
enjoying the search process - the more
accurate solutions) | 1 2 3 4 5 |
| 12. Different teaching aids | 1 2 3 4 5 |
| 13. Teacher's activity | 1 2 3 4 5 |

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14. Student's activity

1 2 3 4 5

With grades 1 to 5 (1 - disagree, 2 - mostly disagree, 3 – neither disagree nor agree, 4 - mostly agree, 5 - agree), please assess the level of agreement / disagreement with the following statements on obstacles to active learning:

The obstacles to active learning on teaching classes are:

1. the existing structure and culture of the school (how the school is organized and what kind of relationships are within it) 1 2 3 4 5

2. Teachers' insecurity 1 2 3 4 5

3. Unpreparedness of the students 1 2 3 4 5

4. Insufficient school equipment 1 2 3 4 5

5. Lack of time (content coverage) 1 2 3 4 5

6. It requires too much time and effort 1 2 3 4 5

7. Class size (number of students in class, size of classroom) 1 2 3 4 5

8. Non-observance of class rules 1 2 3 4 5

9. Lack of knowledge, skills and competences of teachers in this area 1 2 3 4 5

10. Other active learning obstacles not mentioned: 1 2 3 4 5

On the scale of 1 to 5 (1 - undeveloped, 2 - mostly underdeveloped, 3 - neither underdeveloped nor developed, 4 - mostly developed, 5 - developed), evaluate the development of your knowledge, skills and competencies:

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I possess knowledge, skills and abilities (competences):

- | | |
|--|-----------|
| 1. in the field of the methodology of teaching curriculum building (planning, designing and testing of teaching / content) | 1 2 3 4 5 |
| 2. in the area of organization and management of the educational process (teaching classes) | 1 2 3 4 5 |
| 3. in the field of determining students' achievement at school (students' assessment) | 1 2 3 4 5 |
| 4. in the area of classroom atmosphere creating (giving support to students, taking account of student's work overload, relationships within the class, student's success) | 1 2 3 4 5 |
| 5. in the area of parental partnerships with parents (co-operation with parents) | 1 2 3 4 5 |
| 6. Pedagogical-psychological competences (focusing on age, abilities, opportunities, desires and needs of students) | 1 2 3 4 5 |
| 7. Didactic-methodical competences (aimed at better organization of teaching and learning) | 1 2 3 4 5 |
| 8. Professional competences (the teacher can explain and know the contents of the subject) | 1 2 3 4 5 |
| 9. Personal competences (teacher is available, honest, just, interesting, positive) | 1 2 3 4 5 |
| 10. Competences of facilitation (guiding, directing, supporting and encouraging learning) | 1 2 3 4 5 |
| 11. competences in the field of work with others (cooperate with other teachers and are willing to help and share their knowledge) | 1 2 3 4 5 |
| 12. Competences for knowledge, technology and information (they are well-versed in teaching, they can use technology) | 1 2 3 4 5 |

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13. Competences for working in community and 1 2 3 4 5

for community (contributing to the preparation
of students for their role of responsible citizens,
encouraging understanding and appreciation of
other religions and cultures, working with
parents of parents and with the local
community)

14. The competences of lifelong education and 1 2 3 4 5

the elimination of obstacles to the application of
active learning

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CONCLUSION

Once they gain control over their reading, the reluctant, struggling and poor readers will reliably and on their own be able to choose books that match their interests. With their own motivation, they will positively act in their surroundings, motivating others to read from pleasure. In the long run, they will nurture the reading culture by creating a stimulating reading environment, even later in their mature age. It will not only be an encouragement to read more and to read better, it will also be a support for those who have troubles with reading, to seek help whenever they need it. When the process once starts, it will have the effect of a "snowball". By expanding contacts, good reading opportunities, and good news of successful programs heard, a wider audience will be reached. This implies a dynamic process, adaptable to each new interest group, in line with its specific needs with appropriate activities. The tangible results of this process should have a broad impact on European educators. In addition, the results should also be reflected in the shift of the social and educational paradigm whenever problems of reading literacy come to the focus of the policy makers at the level of the participating countries and at the EU level.

We truly and ultimately believe that the materials produced under this project will help everyone who is confronted with this issue on a daily basis, especially those to whom they are initially dedicated to – the reluctant, struggling and poor readers.

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