

DESCRIPTION OF SUCCESSFUL READING PROGRAMME PROGRAMME TITLE: “When Robinson Crusoe met Harry Potter...” PROGRAMME ORGANISER(S): Primary Education Department of Athens University	
Description Created by LiRe Partner Institution: CARDET	
Time & Place	Target Group(s)
School year 2005 25 Primary Schools in and around Athens	849 pupils attending the last two grades of primary school (ages: 10 - 12 years old)
Short Description (Max. 200 words)	
<p>The programme’s philosophy was based on the principles of Active Learning and Reader Response Theory. It was built around the central action of a survey. Pupils conducted this survey, trying to identify what their parents liked to read during their childhood. The survey functioned as a means of activating and involving the pupils’ family environment, as well as a source of inspiration for designing and implementing reading-related activities. The worries, interests and needs of older children who are about to become teenagers and move on to high school were taken into account. Literary works were approached, not as parts of a “lesson,” but as “tools” for enjoyment, stimulation and creativity and “bridges” of communication between children, their friends, and the adult world they are about to enter. The programme started with a training seminar for teachers who volunteered to participate and continued with the survey, which additionally involved parents visiting the schools and sharing their favourite books. After the conclusion of the survey, each educator took into account the results and their pupils’ responses and proposals, in order to design a “tailor-made” programme/project for their class. Each teacher submitted an “Observation and Evaluation Report” in the end.</p>	
Objectives (General & Specific)	
<p>General Objective: To promote the love of reading.</p> <p>Specific Objectives: Children were expected to</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - “Meet on common grounds” with their parents, exploring their own and their parents’ childhood. - Share thoughts and feelings with their fellow students and celebrate what they have learned during their studies in primary school. - To feel proud for what they have achieved and less scared about the transition to high-school. - To discover connections between literature (the art of language) and other arts and sciences. - To develop a series of other skills, not listed in this description for purposes of brevity. 	



Scheme of Reading Promotion Actions & Activities

Step 1

Teacher Training Seminar at Athens University (duration: 30 hours)

Step 2

Survey regarding parents' favourite books from their childhood. In some schools, the results were presented to wider audiences or published by the pupils.

Step 3

"Tailor-made" Programmes for each Group of Students, which included the following actions and activities (the number of groups involved in these actions is listed in the parenthesis):

- Games that involved books (30)
- Creative writing (30)
- Dramatization of book excerpts (21)
- Activities in school library (21)
- Drawing characters and scenes from books (19)
- Constructions with various materials (19)
- Interviews from authors, librarians, educators, etc. (17)
- Transforming into the book's hero through collage (cutting and pasting images) (14)
- Discussion with authors (14)
- Activities involving music and dance (10)
- Designing a book's cover (10)
- Dramatization of stories invented by the pupils (9)
- Creation of collective diaries/journals/scrapbooks (9)
- Designing of page indicators (8)
- Activities in public library (8)
- Watching theatre or film versions of books (7)
- Visit to bookshops and book exhibitions (6)
- Organizing book exhibitions in school (6)
- Illustrating stories (6)
- Workshops to make their own book (6)
- Creative writing competitions (6)
- Survey of reading habits and preferences of other pupils in school (4)
- Publication of newspaper (4)
- Survey of teachers' reading habits and preferences (3)
- Creating posters about books and reading (2)
- Drawing pictures around poems (1)
- Filming video clips to promote reading (1)
- Putting together, organizing and presenting a new school library (1)
- Decorating a bookshop's front window (1)
- Football match between children who pretend to be literary characters (1)
- Chess game with live figures who look like literary characters (1)
- Reading promotion poster competition (1)



Step 4

Observation and Evaluation Reports by teachers

Results / Indicators of Success

Both the coordinators and the participating educators judged the programme as being successful, recognizing at the same time that concrete and measurable data was hard to identify. In their Observation and Evaluation Reports, the vast majority of participating teachers noted the following results/success indicators:

- The enthusiasm, positive mood and intense creativity of participating children
- The pupils' joy and pride in their work for the survey and their participation in the rest of the activities
- The children's commitment and their willingness to collaborate with each other
- General improvements in the class "climate"
- Improvement and development of cognitive and social skills
- Development of a warmer relationship with books and literature
- Introduction of students to research tools and methods
- The engagement of children in artistic expression
- The pupils' communication with their parents

CONCLUSIONS

(WHAT WORKED WELL AND WHY)

- Coordinators and participants recognise the importance of teachers' passionate involvement in the programme. These educators volunteered to participate because they valued reading and literature.
- Enough time and effort was devoted to the teacher-training part of the programme (30 hours during a 3-month period). During this training, teachers functioned themselves as readers and formed reading communities, interacting with books and with each other in creative and playful ways.
- Sufficient time was also devoted to the total programme, as it spanned throughout the school year.
- Research has shown that parents, as reading role-models, are an important factor regarding children's reading habits. This programme used the survey as a clever device to involve parents and enhance their role as reading models.
- Children were actively involved and engaged in all aspects of the programme. The programme was designed based on the principles of Active Learning and Reader Response Theory, which are particularly fit for reading promotion.
- Creative thinking was favoured in all stages and areas of the programme.
- An important success factor was the fact that the programme paid attention to older children's needs and worries, as they are going through a transitional period (from children to teenagers). Moreover, each educator took into account their specific pupils' responses to the survey, as well as their needs, preferences and proposals, before designing the reading related activities that followed. If, for instance, a book by Jules Vern, which was read by parents during their childhood years, was



particularly popular among children, the teacher would build most activities around that book or author.

REFERENCES

Katsiki-Givalou, A. et al. (2008). Filanagnosia sto Scholio. Athens: Pataki.

LINKS TO FURTHER MATERIAL

N/A