



A Teaching-learning Experience on Reading to University Students

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Abstract

LEXCIT (www.lectura.cat) is a Programme whose aim is to improve the reading and comprehension of written texts and whose objective is education success in the global sense of the word. This is a project promoted by "la Caixa", the Education Department of the Generalitat de Catalunya and the Jaume Bofill Foundation. Its ultimate aim is to improve the academic results of primary school pupils, especially their reading competence, through the involvement of the whole community inside and outside the school.

LEXCIT starts from the premise that practising reading and text comprehension enables students to better understand what they read and to progress in their remaining subjects. Dialoguing about what has been read, the pupil will develop her own comprehension strategies. At the same time, the whole student community needs to be involved by making their community participants of what takes place in the school. The volunteer will become for the student a person with whom spend a good time reading. Volunteers are paramount for the development of the project. At the Education Science Faculty (Language and Literature Development Area) at University of Lleida, we work a basic competence with our students: how to teach reading and understand what Primary school pupils understand. To this end, we got in touch with the LEXCIT Programme in the academic year 2011-2012 so that our teacher-students applied the theoretical concepts related to teaching the reading linguistic skill that they had worked on at university.

We held meetings with our Degree voluntary students working within the LEXCIT programme in order to assess aspects of their pedagogical experience with Service-learning project. Service-Learning is a teaching and learning strategy that integrates meaningful community service with instruction and reflection to enrich the learning experience, teach civic responsibility, and strengthen communities. Among the ideas that came up in these encounters, we would like to highlight the following: firstly, they observed a change in attitude towards reading from those students who previously presented problems in the development of this linguistic skill and an increase in their self-esteem when reading texts adequate to their learning ability and the reinforcement of their confidence results in higher fluency in their reading and an improvement of their text comprehension. Secondly, our university students reaffirm that not only is reading a source of pleasure and entertainment, as sustained by traditional teaching institutions, but reading is also a linguistic skill that encourages people to converse, write, discover, give meaning, deal with our own experiences and, all in all, to be.

To sum up, this is a new pedagogical project that from a social perspective (volunteer work) and educational perspective (teachers) intends to increase pupil's reading ability as a fundamental tool to improve social and school results.