

## Through the PIRLS Looking Glass: Perspectives in Reading Literacy in Romania

**Aniela Mancas**

Bucharest University (Romania)

[jacoboschia@yahoo.com](mailto:jacoboschia@yahoo.com)

### Abstract

The paper starts from an analysis of the Romanian four graders' results in the Progress in International Reading Literacy Study (PIRLS). This shows rather low scores as compared to the international average in all of the the four reading comprehension processes, namely focus on and retrieve explicitly stated information, make straightforward inferences, interpret and integrate ideas and information, examine and evaluate content, language, and textual elements.

An analysis of the curricular provision for reading has also been carried out in order to determine to what extent the PIRLS comprehension processes represent targets for the students' learning in primary education. The results of this analysis highlight a gap between the Romanian curriculum in a broad sense - official provision and classroom practice - and the competences involved in reading literacy.

In order to bridge this gap the paper highlights new perspectives to approach reading comprehension with 10-11 year olds. Firstly, the students are offered one of the literary texts from the previous PIRLS cycles so that they become familiar with contemporary children's literature. Secondly, they are challenged with the inquisitive questions that target the four comprehension processes. Thirdly, they are involved in interdisciplinary projects which mainly focus the text interpretation and the evaluation of textual elements, as the scores of the Romanian students are particularly low in these two processes.

On the basis of observation grids, the paper shows how the students improve their comprehension processes and they become more motivated for reading.

Key words: processes in reading comprehension, interdisciplinary projects, traditional /vs/ innovative approaches to reading, Progress in International Reading Literacy Study