



Development of Reading Competences in Inclusive Primary Schools

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Abstract

The Czech Republic is in the situation of the global transition on the field of society, economy as well as education. The trend on the field of education is to analyse the European trends in education and in teacher training. The Czech Republic took part in different international researches on reading literacy, math and biology (TIMSS, PISA, PIRLS). The last results in reading literacy has been recognized as very poor ones. The poorest in last 10 years. The presentation will describe the large project for development reading literacy at primary school, which affects more than 3000 pupils and 250 teachers in one year. The project is sponsored by EU. The main activities are: interactive reading textbooks for free time reading (for different age groups), cross-country internet online reading competition open for each child, in service training for teachers, development of criteria for the evaluation of school curricula (reading literacy) and criteria for evaluation and self evaluation of reading literacy for teachers, pupils and school inspectors, international conference for teachers, researchers and workshops for pupils.

1. Introduction

Transformation of the Czech society has got an impact on all levels of life of the society including economy, law, social field and last but not least education.

In the past the level of Czech education reached high standards and recognition but today, due to different international researches, Czech students have good encyclopaedic knowledge without capability of its functional use and practical application. It influences all fields of literacy, unfortunately, the area of reading literacy.

Development of reading literacy had always been in the focus of attention. The results of international researches have proved that Czech students reading techniques are very good and even their level of general comprehension is relatively high. On the other hand they are not able to work with texts further on, to seek and work with information, critically assess or transform them. In the area of didactics of reading this competence is called functional use of reading and a crucial part of this competence is so called "judging" from the text [5].

Czech Republic has taken part in several international researches monitoring a level of learners' literacy [TIMSS, PISA]. The results were all the same. The only exception was the results reached by ten-year old Czech students that proved their relatively good competence of working with the text further on.

Repetitive problematic situation of Czech students in reading leads to more analysis and strategic steps that followed. There is a whole scale of them and school education and its innovation are considered to be the major ones. The effective ways of teacher-parent collaboration are part of them. The range of new methods how to teach reading and even pilot tasks were published. So-called training tasks have been set up and presented in courses for practicing teachers and have changes impact on pre-graduate courses for future teachers. The greatest support to these activities is given by the European Structural Funds, and so in the context of previous findings, let me introduce one of them to you. It is the most widely spread one focused on development of reading literacy in schools [4].



2. Project: Development of Reading Competences in the Inclusive Primary Schools

This project has been receiving finances from ESF within the frame of prior axis of primary education in the field of improving its quality. The financial support has been received for the period from 1 December 2009 to 31 May 2012 by the faculty of Education, Charles University, and Prague. The leader of the project is the Dean, Associate Professor Radka Wildova, CSc.

3. Focus and Aims of the Project

The aims and focus of the project are to raise level of reading literacy of students according to current experts' results, to enlarge qualification of pedagogical staff and than to innovate methods and teaching materials and even website applications.

Development and support of reading literacy are bases for an assumption of learning key competences. Those are parts of personal resources for success in a job market. On the basis of analysed results and outputs of schools' frameworks of education they will be innovated in the intentions of different curricular areas and inter-curricular topics of General Framework of Education for primary and lower-secondary schools [1].

The next part of the project is education of members of school staffs in the area of proper use of the latest methods form implementation of innovative tools in order to support development of reading literacy in schools and other educative institutions. Pedagogical staff will be able than to react to the latest findings and current information from pedagogical sciences, researches and even practice of given areas.

Inseparable part of the project is an effort to create appropriate means of evaluation towards the Czech School Inspection.

3.1 The main aims of the projects

The main aims of the projects are development of reading literacy primary and lower-secondary schools students in different curricular areas, cross-curricular areas [2, 3].

Read and create

The national competition is aimed to a development of reading competences in different curricular areas. The competition is designed for class teams in four categories. The number of teams from one school is not limited. The subjects are: writing short stories, poems, rhymes, solving quizzes, crosswords and in creating illustrations. The winning teams in each category are awarded by An invitation to The National Conference in Prague.

Read and know

As a part of key activities of the project *I read and know* three new worksheets have been created. The first is for pupils of the first forms, the second for pupils of the second and the third forms and the third one for pupils of the forth and fifth forms.

Workbooks are focused on reading literacy and teachers are welcomed to use them freely according to their consideration. Work with these workbooks doesn't require any systematic work, doesn't replace textbooks and reading books but they can be used as a supplementary material. The authors are the fully qualified teachers and researchers.

Another activity included blog on websites of the projects and interactive elements of teaching.

The further education of teachers and Czech school inspection [further on CSI]

- Seminars "Support of reading literacy" for teachers
- More follows

Creating and testing methods of evaluation [self-evaluation]

- Diagnostic tools for teachers – reading skills in different sections
- Diagnostic tools for pupils, self-evaluation feedback
- Diagnostic tools for CSI



Producing methodological and didactic materials [use of websites]

- Websites <http://www.cteme.eu>
- Electronic support of courses organized in virtual class environment Moodle
 - [web <http://moodle.cteme.eu>]

Activities headed by the week of reading literacy [31 October – 4 November 2011]

- The National Meeting Of Teachers And Students Involved In The Project
 - Final Results of the competition *Read and create* prize Rewarding
 - Presentation of winning projects
 - Publication of examples of a good practice
 - And more other actions
- The International Conference On Support Of Reading Competences
 - Organizing conferences [teachers and pupils sections]
 - Significance of the Conference is to create a space for presentation and sharing the latest results of research and application finding in the area of support and development of reading literacy
- Development Of Reading Competences In Inclusive Schools
- Activities linked with *Read and create* and *I read and know* [see above]
- Publication of monograph and methodology of examples of “Good practice”

4. Resolvers of the Project

Applicants [both institutions and persons] work with teachers freely according to local standards and individual persons used to or still work with pupils. They are either external teachers or during model teaching practices. The main resolver Associate Professor Radka Wildova, CSc. regularly prepares activity for the target groups of the project. They are mostly in the area of further education of working teachers, reading activities for students of schools, publication of methodological and didactic materials for teachers and students.

She realizes them in the position of the Associate Professor of Charles University of The Faculty of Education where she is predominately oriented on reading literacy. She is the President of Czech Society for support and development of reading skills [CzechRA] and the member of the European committee for education of future educators of future teachers [ATEE].

5. Innovative Effect of the Project

Innovative effect of the project is based on an effort to create and realize target groups for development of reading competences across primary school curriculum in the context of inclusive education. These activities are accomplished with theoretical methods and didactic materials published or as electronic resources. Pupils of different schools and age groups are involved in the project that thus reaches the national wide character.

The major innovation is to create test tools for evaluation of reading competences for different target groups. For an added value of the project we can consider even a permanent attention, which is during the time spent on the project, invested into problems of reading of multicultural minorities and students with special needs. The factual stress should be given to inclusion of above-mentioned groups. Has not been

The national wide activities of the project attract students of different schools and age groups. But from our standpoint this area has not been neither scientific nor methodological look into yet [6].

6. Key Activities of the Project and its Outcomes

KA1 – Analyse of selected School Frameworks of Education from a standpoint of reading competences. The way of identifying suggestions of innovation of School Framework of Education

Date: 4 January 2010 – 31 December 2011

Outcomes:

- Analyse of selected 250 SFE according to common identified criteria



- Formulation of outcomes and recommendations for innovation of SFE from a standpoint of reading literacy
- Publication of examples of a good practice of innovation

KA2 – Teachers education

Date: 4 January – 31 December 2012

Outcomes:

- Yearly system of courses DVU [In-service education of teachers]
- Methodological materials for the courses
- Use of Moodle for electronic support of teaching and individual consultations
- Video trailer on methodology

KA3 – Tools of evaluation reading competences

Date: 1 February – 31 May 2012

Outcomes:

- Tools for self-evaluation of students
- Tools for teachers' evaluation, recommendations for their use
- Tools for CSI evaluation
- Video trailer on methodology

KA4 – The National Project “ READ and CREATE”

Date: 1 February – 31 May 2012

Outcomes:

- The National competition “ Read and Create”
- Activities supporting reading development [website]
- The National Meeting of students
- Two publications of selected and rewarded works of students

KA5 – Publication “ I read and I know”

Date: 1 March – 31 March 2012

Outcomes:

- Producing three workbooks from ten different areas of cross-curricular topics
 - [1 class, 2-3 classes, 3 classes, 4 – 5 classes]
- WWW portal for more reading tasks

KA6 – The National meeting of teachers and students involved in the project

Date: 4 January – 30 April 2012

Outcomes:

- Organizing the national meeting [two sections -teachers and students]
- Publication of good practice examples [teachers' section]

KA7 – The International Conference Supporting Development of students' reading competences

Date: 4 January – 31 March 2012 [The Conference in 2011]

Outcomes:

- Preparation and organization of the international conference
- Publication of specialized monograph

KA8 – Website portal [threshold] in order to support reading competences

Date: 4 January – 31 May 2012

Outcomes:

- Making WWW portal
- Updating, setting up specialized articles and methodological materials

KA9 – Cooperation with students of primary and lower-secondary schools focused on development of their reading competences.

Date: 4 January 2010 – 31 March 2012



Outcomes:

- System of effective cooperation [workshops, common reading tasks, dramatization]
- Manual topics, recommendations
- Presentation of interesting examples of “Good work” on websites of the project and during the national conference of teachers.

7. Conclusions

The Project represents one of the important areas of development of reading literacy in school. The most positive feature is the fact that there are large numbers of identified target groups [teachers, students, Czech school inspection]. Nowadays we have already obtained practical experience of integration of the project into school practice. It proves that teachers and students show a great interest to get involved into the project. These days the new part of the project for other regions in the Czech Republic will be finalized.

References

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