READING
WITH EASE
AND FUN

Teachers Handbook
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INTRODUCTION

A lot of changes in science, society, the environment and in every person take place at the end of the 20th century. The number of information sources is rapidly growing as a result of modern technology development, which is significantly affecting interest in reading. Unfortunately, children read less and less - this trend is linked with both extensive leisure facilities for young people and busy daily rhythm of parents (Gudakovska, 1995). Researches on students' reading skills such as OECD research (Geske, Ozola, 2007; OECD, 2010), Eurydice research "Teaching Reading in Europe: Contexts, Policies and Practices" (2009), "ADORE: Teaching Adolescent Struggling Readers, A Comparative Study of Good Practices in European Countries" (Garbe et al., 2009) lead to the conclusion that in society, where different types of technology are introduced more often, students' interest and motivation for reading reduce and therefore literacy rate suffers. A strong correlation between the students' interest in reading and the average achievements has been found (Geske, Ozola, 2007). It has been concluded that a high level of reading skills ensure optimal learning conditions (Gurung, Schwartz, 2009) because it is a prerequisite that students will be able to learn well the content of other subjects - mathematics, history, geography, biology, chemistry, physics - in the future (ALIRANA, 2015). Reading significantly affects the quality of life in the long term, but the low level of reading skills can affect the student's overall development, to reduce his/her capacity, as well as to burden inclusion in modern changing society (Ušča, Rozenfelde, Ogriņa, Vindeče, 2016). The European Commission stresses that literacy is the condition for acquisition of key competences and life-long learning, it is therefore necessary to develop a new strategic program for acquisition of basic skills, in particular reading, at the early age (Eiropas Savienības Oficiālais Vēstnesis, 2010, 117/1).

One of the main objectives of the project "Education Strategies adult education", No. 2015-1-IT02-KA204-015049, is to improve primary school teachers' professional competence to work with students, to promote awareness
of the written word and to motivate to improve reading skills through innovative and attractive methods. The development of interest in reading and necessary skills is important at the primary stage because the first reading experience is mastered; the basic reading skills and attitude towards reading are already formed until the fourth school year.

The development boundaries of primary school children are defined by their individual level and peculiarities of development and are affected by various environmental factors, personality of parents and teachers, which influence each other and form a child's personality (Fišers, 2005). This is the age when the leading type of activity gradually moves over from games on learning activities, a child acquires the necessary basic knowledge and skills in order to start reading independently and prepare for literature reading (Ptičkina, 1999). The acquired skills to read and understand a written text in the primary school will have a major impact on the quality of life in the next school years and in the future, because the efficiency of reading ensures optimal learning conditions, but in the long term - inclusion in the modern economic, social and cultural activities.

1. READING AS A PROCESS

1.1 What is Reading?

Reading is one of the most important basic skills of a human, it is a purposeful activity that requires effort and motivation. It is needed to understand and use those written language forms which are necessary for society and/or are significant for an individual.

Reading is defined as the ability to perceive, understand, evaluate, and use written information and knowledge in different situations. Reading means understanding of the read text, its usage and application of information in the learning process throughout the whole life. Reading is much more than just recognition of letters and words; it also includes understanding of meanings of words, knowledge of facts, things and phenomena in general. While reading, a person should be able to decode/use a language and apply knowledge of syntax in accordance with the general perceptions of the world, understand abstract texts, form summaries of single and multiple texts etc. So reading is a complex construct, because it includes reproduction of a word's sound forms according to
its figurative sign: reception and understanding of characters, texts, symbols and their expression in sounds, words, sentences (speaking). In parallel, it is also a process in which the read text's content and the possibilities for its use are perceived and evaluated. Reading literacy consists of such basic components as motivation (aspiration for knowledge, skills, interest in the read text), operativeness (it is achieved with special activities) and control/self-control (Artelt, 2001, Schneider & Hasselhorn, 2008; Skujiņa et al., 2011; Zumbach & Mandl, 2008; Эльконин, 1998).

A man with developed reading skills knowingly performs the following steps:

1) reads the printed text with a specific purpose;
2) reads the text according to its nature and understands its content;
3) relates the read information to the already known information;
4) analyzes the read information, acquires new information/experience;
5) quickly recognizes words, so the priority is the text's content (Geiger, Millis, 2004).

In most cases, reading is learned and perfected between the ages of 6 and 11. This is the primary school stage when the children's development boundaries are defined by their individual level and peculiarities of development and are affected by various environmental factors, personality of parents and teachers, which influence each other and form a child's personality (Fišers, 2005). It is emphasized that the development of reading literacy is contributed to the curriculum integration that is being implemented in the conditions of cooperation between teachers of various subjects and parents, reading and interest in reading in general is encouraged in family (Upeniece & Šenne, 2014).

1.2 Reading as a Process

It has been concluded in the research carried out already in 1992 that cognitive skills and physical abilities (for example, memory, orientation, eye movements) are extremely important for reading (Tunmer, Hoover, 1992). It is emphasized also in later researches (Blakemore, Frith, 2005; Kintsch, Dijk, 1978; Tübele, 2008, et al.) that reading is a complex psycho-physiological
process where analyzers of vision, speech, movement and hearing interact with each other, whereas acquisition of reading is connected with united operation of practically all brain structures. As a result, the brain distinguishes the essential from the insignificant; synergy of memory, language and thinking provides perception of communicative intentions and its decoding based on prior knowledge and preservation in memory.

The importance of the visual analyzer is especially emphasized; the visual operational field - the amount of letters perceived at the same time - is essential in reading skills acquisition. The developed visual perception is necessary for a reader to capture the graphic information in the reading process as well as the corresponding procedures in the brain that processes the perceived information. It is necessary to have the ability to coordinate eye movements with reception of the sense of the seen scenery and the ability to assess accurately what to read and how thoroughly to do it in accordance with the purpose of reading (Geiger & Millis, 2004).

The activities of the right hemisphere of the brain determine how the text is perceived, how the spatial configuration and arrangement of letters are being mastered. The perception of letters and words and their sequence from left to right takes place at the same time (Schachl, 2006; Sousa, 2005; Tūbele, 2015). Reading is described as a complex sensory thinking ability to capture the signs and articulate their formative concept. There is also an evidence of genetic predisposition and a number of other factors affecting reading skills acquisition and dyslexia origin - the environment, cultural context, reading acquisition methods etc. (Blakemore, Frith, 2005; Reid, 2003; Snowling, 2004; Sousa, 2005; Tūbele, 2015; Корнев, 2003).

1.3 Importance of Reading in Child’s Development

The results of research (Ušča, Rozenfelde, Ogrinya, Vindeče, 2016) suggest that parents are well aware of the importance of reading in the child's development. While analyzing and organizing the content of the researched material, three aspects of the student's development were distributed conceptually: educational, development and socialization aspect (see Fig. 1)
A strong correlation between the students' interest in reading and the average achievements has been found in the researches (Geske, Ozola, 2007). It has been concluded that the high level of reading skills ensures the optimal learning conditions (Gurung, Schwartz, 2009) because it is a prerequisite that students will be able to learn well the content of other subjects - mathematics, history, geography, biology, chemistry, physics - in the future (ALIRANA, 2015). Reading significantly affects the quality of life in the long term, but the low level of reading skills can affect the student's overall development, to reduce his/her capacity, as well as to burden inclusion in modern changing society.

1.4 Development of Reading Skills

The development of reading skills is complicated. It involves not only learning to read, but also reading to learn.

The development of reading skills takes place in three stages (see Fig. 2).
**Pre-reading stage.** There are two aspects that are important before learning to read:

1) positive interaction with the written word. The environment and attitude of people around, especially in the family, towards reading are important in this aspect, possibility to turn over the pages of various books, listening to reading aloud, discussions about it, feeling emotions, seeing close people who read willingly. Staying in the stimulating environment develops early interest in reading (Mand, 2008) that is one of the preconditions for successful development of reading skills. If parents have a lack of time or other reasons, do not read aloud to their child, do not look at illustrations and talk about them, it has a negative impact on learning to read (Kauliņa, 2012).

2) development of different skills, for example, letter recognition, merging in syllables, phonematic perception, visual memory, developed spatial concepts, adequate level of development of visual analysis and synthesis etc (Auziņa, 2014; Tūbele, 2008).

**Acquisition of reading skills** is one of the most important preconditions for students' education and development, which basically evolves till the Form 4. A student has to acquire the reading process. The reading process is a complex...
skill of sensory thinking to perceive signs and articulation of a concept that they form. Only then reading skills are acquired and, by reaching a certain level of quality, a student is able to understand, analyze, evaluate and express attitude to what he/she has read. It is important to create interest in and understanding of reading in this process, because the motivation is formed by realizing the personal sense of own activities and integration with the existing experience (Kolb, 1984).

**Development of reading skills.** Firstly, it is a life-long process, acquiring new reading strategies, reading in other languages etc. Secondly, reading is a complex construct, because

- it includes reproduction of a word's sound form by its figurative sign: reception of a character, word, symbol, understanding and expression with sounds, words, sentences (speaking);

- it is a process in which understanding, comprehension and evaluation of the author's communicative intent, perception of information contained in the printed or written word or text take place with an aim to use the potential of the obtained information and knowledge in the public life and express own views on the read text in a structured manner;

- it is composed of basic components such as motivation (aspiration for knowledge, skills, interest in the read material), operativeness (it is achieved with special activities) and control/self-control (Artelt, 2001, Schneider &Hasselhorn, 2008; Skujiņa et al., 2011; Zumbach&Mandl, 2008; Эльконин, 1998; Ищук, 2001).

### 1.5 Components of Reading Skills

Пет са компонентите на добрите четивни умения:

Five components of good reading skills are emphasized:

1. **Phonematic hearing.** Words are made up of individual sounds or phonemes. Humans have the ability to distinguish between these sounds and manipulate with them. Every sound of a language is represented by one or more letters.
2. **Phonics** is the ability to present every sound of a language with one or more letters. A child should understand that words are formed from combinations of separate sounds.

3. **Reading fluency** is the ability to decode a text accurately, quickly and with the expression corresponding to a content.

4. **Vocabulary** - these are words that a person needs to know for being able to communicate and read in a specific language. Vocabulary is very important to understand a text that is being read.

5. **Comprehension of a text.** It is the main reason why people read, because it does not make sense to read words without understanding. (Put reading first, 2003; Rokasgrāmata vecākiem, kuru bērniem ir disleksija, 2015).

### 2. READING IN THE MODERN SOCIETY: ELECTRONIC OR TRADITIONAL BOOKS?

The development of today's students takes place in the world where technologies have become an integral part of life. There are discussions about the new generation that is called both the "digital generation" and the "Internet generation" (Prensky, 2001; Roberts 2005; Tapscott, 1998). There are different views on the impact of modern technologies on the reading skills development in literature: from the belief that technology impedes reading skills development (Malahova et.al, 2014; Stikute, 2011; Tūbele, 2011) to the opinion that it is a tool to diversify methods and foster interest in the written text (Juškaite, 2008).

Being in the media environment right from the birth has affected students' perception and the way of thinking. Significant differences in the results of research on technology implications should be examined critically. A child's desire to participate can decrease due to technology impact (Rubene, 2011) because a too frequent use of technology robs time of 12-year-old child that he/she could use for active work, thus contributing to the brain development, including the imagination, forming cooperation skills with peers in real time and space (Harfs, Kampe, 2011).
2.1 Characteristics of the “Digital Generation”

Unlike the earlier generations, when the world scene was designed conceptually, a child living in the modern information technology environment does it with the help of visual notions (Rubene, 2011; Абраменкова, 2008). Today's students, their perception and habits are different as well. These students are characterized by:

- desire for self-development;
- curiosity, quick perception, the priority is given to visual information and hypertext;
- focus on quick solutions to problems and achievements; the ability to do several things at the same time;
- work, learning, meeting, shopping etc. on the Internet;
- social openness, tolerance, focus on social interaction; increased need for attention and response to accomplished tasks;
- focus on achievements, innovation, the latest technologies;
- questioning of everything (Buckingham, 2000; Prensky, 2001; Roberts 2005; Tapscott, 1998).

Changes in the students' perception and way of thinking make it necessary to look for means that would help to maintain students' interest, enable acquisition of the educational objectives, promote the development of learning skills and meet students' needs for self-development and self-regulatory learning. Despite the opinions of many authors (Azevedo, 2005; Godwin – Jones, 2011, Koehler&Mishra, 2008 et al.) that such means are IT, which have become an integral part of a school, research has shown that inclusion of IT skills in, for example, mathematics, science and language subjects, is surprisingly rare in the European countries.

2.2 Impact of the Information Technologies on Child’s Development

Children and students' interest in information technology is often perceived as a threat to traditional values, including reading habits. The discussion is also about how much, if at all, people will read, whether and to what extent
electronic books are necessary. I. Skulte (2011) considers that the result depends on the socio-cultural acceptance and interpretation in the wider public because an electronic book is also a verbal text encoded in written symbols, and its conceptual perception and popularity depends on the children's understanding and attitudes towards it, what and how, where and for what purpose they read a book. In addition, e-books have their advantages:

1) location in a small, portable device;

2) the ability to find the necessary edition or text fragment mobile from anywhere (Skulte, 2011).

In any case, taking into consideration the new generation's interest in the new technologies, they cannot be ignored by organizing the educational process, including acquisition and development of reading skills. So one should be aware of the benefits that modern technologies offers:

1) they are more personal, because information and tasks can be adapted to individual abilities and interests, thereby contributing to application of individual and differentiated approach;

2) they are interactive, correspond to the perception of the "Internet generation";

3) they are developing, facilitate to development of meta-competences and self-regulation;

4) they are motivating, create the opportunity to learn at own request at the desired place and time, they are interesting for students;

5) they are global, offering information and communication with the whole world;

6) satisfy students' need for self-development and self-regulated learning;

2.3 Use of ICT in the Pedagogical Process

Z. Anspoka (2011) acknowledges that specially prepared digital educational tools, if they are used purposefully, allow to use the senses (sight, hearing, touch, movement) in the learning process and, based on them, to form associations with the previously acquired experience. A student is able to compare objects, words, group them by various features, connect, separate, colour, write, edit, check the result, evaluate, listen to records and record own speech etc. In addition, students like working on the computer.

Moreover, ICT is an invaluable support in different learning areas. Their specific features manifest themselves not only as the compulsory minimum of knowledge, skills and competencies, but also as new rules and habits of school life (Skulte, 2012).

In order to use the above mentioned advantages of ICT in the learning process organization, it is not enough with the teacher's pedagogical and learning content knowledge. Technological knowledge is required as well, as the available software and the Internet resources do not always coincide with the curriculum, teaching and learning objectives (Gremmo & Riley, 1995; Koehler & Mishra, 2008).

When planning the educational activities with the use of IT, a teacher must be prepared to the following:

1) to set learning objectives;
2) to identify students' learning experience through the use of technology;
3) to choose tools and resources that contribute to the objectives' achievement;
4) to offer activities that make up a new learning experience;
5) to cooperate by providing learning outcomes and developing appropriate evaluation strategies (Harris & Hofer, 2009; Jones, 2010).

Otherwise, the use of IT can turn into entertainment, but a student, being unable to use the informative opportunities offered by IT in a selective manner, becomes a victim of the media.
3. RESEARCH ON READING LITERACY

3.1 Research on the Level of Reading Literacy

The Progress in International Reading Literacy Study (PIRLS) developed by the International Association for the Evaluation of Educational Achievement (IEA) measures students' reading achievements in the fourth grade in most of the countries participating in the research. In almost all European education systems, these students are approximately 10 years old, but the average age ranges from 9.7 years in Italy to 11.4 years in Luxembourg (Mullis et al., 2007, p.31). PIRLS data are collected every five years. PIRLS survey evaluates the reading skills needed to move to the "reading literacy necessary for learning" (Mullis et al., 2006).

In turn, the Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA) survey aims to assess to what extent students have mastered the knowledge and skills that are needed in adult life. In this research, reading literacy is seen as an indicator of students' preparedness for life and work (OECD, 2009). It concluded that the indicators of students' reading skills are greatly affected by domestic and family circumstances (OECD, 2010a). PIRLS survey also reported a significant relationship between students' progress in reading and parents' higher education and employment (Mullis et al., 2007). The majority of students with reading difficulties have less educated parents, and they come from socially and economically disadvantaged families, which usually lack educational resources, including books. In most countries, adverse effects on reading achievements have students of immigrant families, especially the ones who speak at home other language than the language of instruction. However, the domestic and family impact is different in various countries, which suggests that the strong connection between the students' living conditions and learning progress may be reduced in some education systems (OECD, 2010a).

Both research surveys are based on a concept that includes not only the text comprehension processes and skills, but also types of reading skills usage and attitude towards reading, which characterize good readers. Both PIRLS and PISA surveys treat reading as an interactive and constructive process. They emphasize the importance of students' ability to reflect on what they have read and to use reading for different purposes (Mullis et al., 2006:103).

The international Eurydice study "Teaching Reading in Europe: Contexts, Policies and Practices" (2009) shows that about one-fifth of 15-year-old
adolescents in the European Union have reading difficulties. The study stresses that the focus is often not given to the groups of reading difficulties risk. Therefore, the European Union countries have agreed to reduce the number of unskilled readers to less than 15% by 2020, stressing that reading difficulties can be prevented effectively if problems are identified and solved as early as possible.

3.2 Research on the Development of Reading Literacy

Strategies that contribute to the development and improvement of reading literacy are studied in the scientific literature. It is concluded that a combination of several strategies can enable more effective learning, better transfer of knowledge, improvement of memory and general comprehension of a text. The example of the combined strategy is a "mutual teaching" (Palincsar and Brown, 1984), when a teacher explains and demonstrates four strategies of comprehension - asking questions, summarizing, clarification and prediction - and helps to use them by creating a dialogue with students when they try to understand the essence of the text. Recent studies carried out in Europe confirm the beneficial effects of the mutual teaching on text comprehension in school education. For example, M. Takala (Takala, 2006) in Finland has clarified that the mutual learning is the most effective approach for teaching text comprehension to students of comprehensive schools (fourth and sixth grades), but this method also helps students with language disorders. G. Brooks has concluded in his research report (Brooks, 2007) that the mutual teaching improves reading accuracy of students with reading difficulties and influences their reading comprehension significantly. N. Sporer, J. Brunstein and U. Kieschke (Spörer, Brunstein, Kieschke, 2009) have studied students of 210 German primary schools who were taught the strategies of summarizing, asking questions, clarification and prediction and who were involved in one of three types of the mutual teaching - in a small group, in pairs or in small groups under the guidance of a teacher. The researchers found that those students, who participated in the mutual teaching in small peer groups, performed standardized reading comprehension tests better than those who worked in a teacher-led group.

The European project "ADORE: Teaching Struggling Adolescent Readers. A Comparative Study of Good Practices in European Countries" (Garbe et al.,
2009) researched thoroughly the reading literacy instruction of adolescents with reading difficulties in eleven European countries. It was found that the main reasons that hinder the students to master reading skills are related to the above-mentioned fields of text comprehension, meta-cognitive skills, use of reading strategies and reading motivation. Reading Instruction Cycle was later developed within the framework of the project which was intended as a good teaching model with the main objective - to promote positive students' self-esteem and self-confidence. The key elements of this cycle at the level of lessons are as follows:

- students are involved in planning of the learning process, and they are given the opportunity to participate in decision-making about the process;
- when it is possible, students are allowed to choose their own reading material from a wide range of texts;
- students are involved in formation of texts, allowing to develop answers and views on a specific text in collaboration with peers and teachers;
- meta-cognitive strategies are being taught and self-regulation abilities are being developed so that the text comprehension becomes more conscious and strategic;
- formative or diagnostic assessment is being used, adapting the instruction according to needs of individual students and putting a basis to regular communication and discussion about the content and reading-related problems with students about their success and progress.

3.3 Research on ICT

By analyzing the habits of electronic materials reading, it is concluded that the Internet and other forms of information technology have widened the nature of reading, which points to the need to broaden the range of students' skills. Students need to have a broader range of skills to read not only printed, but also electronic texts (Coiro and Dobler, 2007). In addition, a correlation with the development of critical thinking is observed by developing the ability to find and read electronic texts (Leu, 2002). Children in Latvia would like to have the study books of the e-format, however, they do not consider this an important
innovation compared to the printed book. It is probably due to the relatively small range of available electronic books in Latvian (Skulte, 2011).

3.4 Research on the Role of Parents in the Development of Child’s Reading Literacy

An important factor in reading skills acquisition is involvement of parents (Hood, Conlon & Andrews, 2008; Torppa et al., 2006). Parents' own reading interests and habits are important, as well as the availability of books, but even more important is reading together and to a child, joint participation in various reading activities (Lasītprasmes mācīšana Eiropā: konteksts, rīcībpolitika un prakse, 2011). Parents' behaviour and attitude towards their child's school activities greatly affect the learning environment, so showing the interest in child's success in reading, joint reading, library attendance etc. activities contribute to the child's progress in reading.

Parents' positive attitude, control that is realized as a check of the learned material and assistance in case of difficulties contribute to achievement of a higher level of reading and formation of motivation to read (Patall et al., 2008; Xu, 2012).

In studies (Dearing et al., 2004; Mullis et al., 2007), it is concluded that the child's reading literacy level is influenced by a parents' level of education, their social status and the level of employment. There is a big difference in terms of reading literacy within the school-age children, depending on family income level. Moreover, differences of reading skills depending on income levels have risen significantly over the past fifty years (Reardon, 2011). In turn, parents' participation contributes to the child's achievements, especially in families where parents have a relatively low level of education (Horvat, Weininger & Lareau, 2003).

Parents can be excellent organizers of educational activities, including reading skills acquisition (Sénéchal & Young, 2008). Extra-curricular activities for language development and the time a child spends at home reading and receiving parental support, contribute to the achievements of reading acquisition (Fryer & Levitt, 2006; Hart & Risley, 1995). Before the acquisition of reading skills and at its early stage, it is important for parents to read to a child, because it creates interest in the written word. Unfortunately, research carried out in
Latvia have shown that 46.4% of fathers and 29.8% of mothers read to their children insufficiently frequently; 19.6% of fathers and 7.9% of mothers do not read to their child at all; 26.8% of fathers and 21.9% of mothers read to a child only a few times a month. The study found a significant correlation: low reading aloud indicators are closely linked to the parents' own childhood experiences. 47.5% of parents recognize that they have a little experience of reading aloud in childhood (Vanags, 2014).

CONCLUSIONS

Reading is a complex psycho-physiological process, and its acquisition requires a united operation of practically all brain structures. It is one of an individual's basic key competences that takes a lot of effort and motivation.

Acquisition of reading skills takes place in three stages: pre-reading stage, acquisition of reading skills and development of reading skills. Parents' example and participation are equally important in these stages as the learning activities performed at school. As a result, the following components, which are necessary for good reading skills, are developed: phonematic hearing, phonics, reading fluency, vocabulary and comprehension of a text.

The acquired level of reading skills ensures optimal learning conditions in the primary school, but, in the long term, it will have an essential impact on the life quality and inclusion in the modern economic, social and cultural activities. Therefore, it is necessary to apply various pedagogical strategies and technologies in order to increase the development of interest in reading, which forms a base of reading motivation, and improve the reading skills of pre-school students.
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INTRODUCTION

From the decade of the 70s, the kindergarten period starts to be considered a time when kids can develop not only sensorimotor, emotional and social skills, but also intellectual abilities. Hence, here is where we set the beginning of reading and writing.

The theory, which traditionally postulates a reading and writing learning from 6 years old, is backed up by several reasons:

- The lack of perceptive development before 6 years old.
- The possibility of causing dyslexia in the new readers.
- Give cause for the inequality and discrimination from this period until the end of the cycle of schooling, as preschool is not compulsory to everybody.
- Teachers will find it easier to start from the beginning with all the students, instead of trying to cover different starting points.

However, at the same time different theories start to appear calling into question those past reasons propounding some others:

- Precocious learning doesn’t stop or deform, but favour the child development and intellectual skills.
- Teaching to read before 6 years old enriches the stimulus of the child’s environment.
- Sensorial, motor, time-space, symbolic and conceptual education are likewise developed, as well as verbal language progress.

Thus, the election of the method is particularly important, depending on the maturational stage that surrounds the kid, where he or she feels absorbed and curious, through games and adventure to bring written words closer.
Authors such as Solé (1993) affirm that ‘reading is an interactive process between a reader and a text, process through which the first one tries to satisfy the objectives that guide his or her reading’. According to this definition, an objective is inherent to the reading act: the desire of getting certain information, following some instructions, having fun…

For authors like Tolchinsky (1993) ‘writing is a process through which a significant text is produced, and has some kind of properties like the formal ones (the ones that characterize writing) and the instrumental ones (the ones that characterize the written language).

Consequently, the person who learns how to write has to master both formal and instrumental properties from the beginning of the educational process.’ Therefore, writing makes the calligraphy of the letters and its relation with the sound they belong to.

According to these learning situations we can find three kinds of activities:

• Activities consisting on solving practical matters and daily lessons.
• Activities which strengthen knowledge.
• Activities to enjoy the pleasure of reading.

1. PROCESSES OF READING ACQUISITION

Reading is a complex skill which involves different mental processes and knowledge (phonological, orthographic, syntactic and semantic, textual and contextual) to extract and interpret the meaning of written information. Traditionally there have distinguished two key components of reading that are:

• Word identification.
• Meaning identification or understanding.

Besides, these two components depend on the knowledge of the language and the world and on the working memory. The word identification on a text entails to start up perceptive and lexical processes, while the meaning
identification or understanding demands that, on top of using the former processes, syntactic and semantic processes are started up.

Connected to this, let’s briefly look over to the processes involved in those two reading components.

**1.1 Processes involved in word recognition**

There are two main processes involved in visual word recognition.

On the one hand, perceptual processes are involved. Linked to them we can find the visual system, responsible for analyzing, decoding and decrypting the graphic signs, projecting them to the brain.

The visual recognition of letters is given in moments of eye fixation. Information extraction is performed in a short period of time. The remaining time of eye fixation is allocated for information processing.

On the other hand, the lexical processes take part. Letter identification is a necessary process to be able to read, but not sufficient. In fact, we can identify the written letters in any alphabetic language not necessarily understanding anything of what there is expressed.

Recognize a word means to decipher the meaning this group of letters represents. There are various competing models to explain how we identify words. Among the most successful models we can find the ones that establish two procedures in word recognition (Coltheart, Rastle, Perry, Langdon and Ziegler, 2001).

The direct method: allows direct access to the orthographic form of the word with its internal representation. This procedure would be similar to the one used when identifying a drawing, a number or a signature. It is used to read the familiar words that are in our memory.

The indirect method (also known as phonemic) leads to the reading of words transforming the letters (or groups of letters) in their corresponding sounds. It is mainly used to read unknown words that are not in our memory store.
Actually, both processes are activated in reading words so that they are complementary and necessary to read. Depending on certain factors such as the type of word or knowledge of the reader, they will be used to varying extent during reading. The visual system has been often overestimated as a cause of reading disorder. The function of this system is not to decode or process information, but to drag it to the occipital cortex and make it conscious.

Research shows that reading difficulties are rarely due to problems in merely perceptual processes.

1.2 Processes involved in meaning identification

Recognize the meaning of each word is not enough to extract and interpret the meaning of a text. It is also essential to recognize the syntactic and semantic relationships the words establish inside the phrases, as well as the ones phrases establish within the text.

Firstly, the information provided by individual words needs to be completed and put into context in the sentence, in which relations with the other words are built. The reader should relate them following certain syntactic keys.

In the syntactic processing phase the roles played by words in prayer are assigned, their relationships are made and the existing hierarchical structure is built between them.

Secondly, once the reader processes several individual ideas, inferences which help to relate those ideas within the text are made, and eventually a network of propositions and macro propositions that must be connected to the base prior knowledge of the reader is instituted. This process of identifying the meaning is very demanding in terms of working memory.

2. PHASES OF READING ACQUISITION

2.1 Logographic phase

Between four and five years, approximately, the child goes through a stage where can globally recognize some words that are familiar for its disposal, its
outline, its format or the context in which they occur. So it is with signs of some brands of cars, their own names, titles cartoons, advertisements, posters and other graphic configurations that may interest them and with whom you have frequent contact.

This recognition comes as the familiar words are presented in their context and in usual order. The child can recognize, for example, the sign of coke in a bottle, but not when it appears out of context and with other types of letters. It is therefore a recognition strategy which allows the child to recognize objects or logos.

It is the time when the child establishes clear links between oral and written language. To do so, the mediation of another person who can read and who will introduce them to the establishment of such relations is necessary.

In the logographic stage, the child is still unable to decipher or segment graphic sequences, although he or she can already distinguish some letters they have learned in the same way as words-logos. This misleads some people to think that when the child goes through this phase, he or she is able to read.

Educators can help overcome this level proposing label and sign recognition tasks with the name of the child, peers and classmates, animal names, easily recognizable objects, etc., accompanied by the corresponding illustration. There are also very appropriate gaming activities such as segmentations of words, rhymes and other experiences that help raise awareness of the correspondence between written words and their meanings and between graphemes and their phonemic correspondence.

### 2.2 Alphabetic phase

In the alphabetic stage, the child becomes aware that words are made up of elements or phonic units and that there is correspondence between these units and their graphical representations (or graphemes). This enables him or her to segment sound sequences and associate the phonemes with their corresponding spelling. It is the time of acquisition of phonological awareness or ability of an individual to realize that the spoken word consists of a basic sounds sequence. These sounds are represented by graphemes, whose recognition and domain allows decipher the written code.
At this stage, which usually ranges from 4 to 6 years, visual perception and discrimination of children continues sharpening and this allows them to distinguish graphical layouts that remained imperceptible until then. This is the case of the letters d, p, b, q, which maintain the identity of form in the rotation, but are already distinguished by the child as graphs that correspond to different phonemes.

During the process of acquiring phonemic awareness, the ability to interpret and ascribe meaning to combinations of letters representing phonemes develops, according to their sequencing. For instance, rich is not the same as pitch, although they contain the same phonemes represented by their corresponding graphemes. The order of sequencing of the components of these words is different. Another important learning consists of developing the ability to read words with the cadence and rhythm needed to award them a meaning. Very often, after pronouncing syllable by syllable, such as the case of e-le-ph-ant, the child repeats ‘oh!Elephant!’

It is, thus, a stage which demands the child great efforts; so that, some of them need a big period of time to overcome it. For that, in the preschool classroom, they have to promote tasks that motivate children and help facilitate the strategies and skills necessary for the acquisition of the written code.

Among the activities that can be carried out in the pre-school classroom to help children overcome this stage, we collect those mentioned by Defior (1996):

- Recognition of rhymes, rhythm and nonsense verse.
- Segmenting words into syllables.
- Identification of the initial phonemes of words.
- Metalinguistic conversations about the sounds that make up language.
- Evaluate the effects of adding and omitting the initial phonemes of words.
- In words of two phonemes: segmenting words into their phonemes.
- In words of three phonemes: segmenting words into their phonemes
- Synthesize or combine phonemes into words.
The use of supporting materials (plates, graphic signs, cards, letters, etc.) facilitates the execution of the tasks. This support will be cut out as children do not need them for their learning.

It is also convenient to use all types of recreational resources; so that, tasks are motivating and keep child attention: language games, words train, songs changing one letter words or cancelling a word, tongue twisters, games with word formation, poems and rhymes, secret languages of various types, passwords, talk like robots, etc.

There are some materials on the market that can help to design ludic activities in which these skills (lotuses, images, etc.) work. With these and other educational resources, it is possible to gradually introduce the different types of tasks referred before, considering their order of difficulty.

2.3 Orthographic phase

Overcoming stage alphabetic does not mean to finish the difficulties of the process that enables a person to be a competent reader. Skilled readers are able to recognize a significant number of words not decoding from their graphemes... When children read the same words repeatedly end up perceiving them as lexical units, not using spelling for proper perception. According to Frith (1989), this skill spectacularly increases from seven or eight years if children practice reading regularly.

If children do not overcome successfully the alphabetic stage, their reading will be slower, as their attention will be focused in practicing decoding abilities...; in orthographic stage, reader attention is essentially focused on giving a meaning to the content he or she reads.

Once overcoming the previous stage, the child will develop strategies that enable immediate recognition of morphemes and units of meaning. It is not a logographic recognition of words anymore, but an ability to immediately perceive the composition of them in different contexts (and with different fonts) and to detect possible errors, as can be supressed or added letters, disorderly sequencing, etc.
In fact, decoding and total reading are processes that occur in any reader. What fundamentally changes is the importance given to each of these processes depending on the stage of learning and the characteristics of the text proposed. Beginners deciphered almost the entire text and only read some very specific words previously learned globally. Expert readers, however, read globally and just need to decode when they find a technical term, an unknown word or a word that has unlikely features of the language in which they are reading.

Although the Frith’s model (1989) is supported by empirical data, not all the researchers agree that children necessarily go through these three stages and in the indicated order. It seems that the process depends on factors such as the method and reading experiences that are provided to children. In addition, these investigations are carried out in the field of English language, as it has been said, shows little graph-phonemic correspondence and consequently prioritizes the initiation of reading through the lexical route with the so-called synthetic or global methods.

3. READING AND WRITING

Reading and writing concept refers to the unification of the two basic linguistic abilities related to the graphic code of the language: Reading and writing.

The term reading and writing refers to the unification of the two basic language skills related to graphic language code: reading and writing.

Although both are related, it is not essential that both learning processes take place simultaneously. Reading and writing are different acts and so are the operations that are turned on.

When we talk about reading and writing we mean the work with both skills even though their sequencing, progression and advance are not parallel.

The oral code uses the vocal apparatus and is necessary to live and express oneself; written code comes out from oral born, but is independent, arbitrary and conventional, and uses graphic signs (letters) that represent the phonemes and, through them, relate to the sounds.
Both need a proper psychomotor development, but both respond to the development of symbolic function (ability to represent and interpret words and situations by written signs, in this case, of a particular linguistic code, of a given language)

We can find several methods to carry out the teaching of reading literacy:

Synthetic methods; they work from synthesis to analysis, from the minor to the major parts by means of composition.

Analytical methods; they are focused on the analysis of elements from the major to the minor parts, always start from significant linguistic and use memorization and association for assimilation.

Methods mixed base; they use analytical and synthetic methods elements and techniques, are based on significant linguistic and use memorization and association to achieve assimilation and continually go from analysis to synthesis and from synthesis to analysis.

Teaching reading and writing is more a methodological issue. That is why a proper method would take into account these three points:

1) It is adjusted to what it is reading and writing.
2) It is adjusted to the child development stage.
3) It does not teach things that they will have to unlearn in a future.

3.1 Analysis of phonic-synthetic system for reading and writing acquisition “Letrilandia. El País de las Letras“

Nowadays, Letrilandia (Usero, 2007) is one of the most common methods in Spanish schools for teaching reading and writing.

Edelvives, the publisher house, describes it this way:

‘Letrilandia is a creative method by which children learn the reading and writing process’. Its main characteristic is the idea of turning the letters into characters of an imaginary world and using the tales fantasy as a motivational element. From the stories that are told the sound of every letter is presented, and
complex aspects of the language are explained in a fun and easy way that children remember naturally.

This method takes the children to a country with letters as inhabitants, each of one is associated to a profession. This way, when we get into Letrilandia, the first characters we find are the royal Family:
The author justifies these roles claiming that the vowels have to have a main role as we can always find them.

Afterwards, she presents us the rest of the letters which are characters of the kingdom, and have their own profession. For example, the baker ‘p’, the milkman ‘l’, the gardener ‘j’, the doorman ‘ll’.

If we pay attention to these steps we realise that the method goes from the minor to the major, so it is a synthetic method: departs from a letter, but establishing a relationship letter-phoneme, so it is a synthetic-phonetic method.
For that, letters are as characters of a story within tales. Each letter is intertwined with others and, so that, and through their conversations, syllables are made up step by step almost like a game.

On their behalf, all the characters have a double function. In the linguistic way, they teach to pronounce properly the sound they represent with their way of talking and facilitate the reading process; secondly, they incarnate determined attitudes: they back up values and maintain common human relationships (as it happens in real life).

Below, we will analyse if Letrilandia accomplishes the three points quoted before to consider it a good method:

Aurora Usero, the author of this method, defines reading as: interpreting, translating, and understanding the message that comes through a code made with abstract signs and conventional sounds.

She states that children recognize more easily abstract symbols (letters) if we provide them with head, limbs, personality, strengths and weaknesses. Thus, children find it easier to associate each of these signs (letters-character) with its corresponding sound: Lady of the Mountain speaks this way: ‘mmmmm’.

Likewise, as mentioned above, ‘Letrilandia’ is a synthetic method (going from minor to major, from the letter to the word). We can draw two conclusions from this fact:

1. The children follow this process: firstly, letter-sound learning; then, syllables and, finally, words. Thus, when the child has reached the last step does not read the word as a whole, but the crumbling into the elements that has learned (letter and syllable).

2. When the child has reached that last step (‘read a word’) the method requires neither time nor learning to read the word at a glance. He or she has to globalize the word and understand it as a whole. This method assumes that the child takes that concept during the period of learning from others.

The positive aspects of the method are:

- It is very motivating for children, who learn to read while playing and become participants in a story.
-Abstract elements (phonemes) become real characters in a story and that makes learning very satisfactory.

-Phonic methods are also very practical for those countries which pronounce letter the same way they are written, such as Spain.

**Developmental stage of the children targeted by the method:**

This method is prepared for pre-school children (3-6 years old) and junior elementary education (6-8 years old).

In order to find out if it fits with the age we will start with the phonemes acquisition, the basis of ‘Letrilandia’. Jakobson, according to Steven (1987) in his distinction by age, makes it clear that it is from 4-6 years old when the child acquires all kinds of sounds (consonant: /p, m, t, j, n, k/ etc.), (occlusive, fricative, and lateral nasal fluids or [d], [g], [t], [k] [l] [n] [i] [j], etc.), (fricatives and affricates: [s] [f], [ch], [y] [z]) and makes combinations of consonant + vowel + consonant (‘pla’) with the simple and multiple [r] and two vowels: au-ei. Hence, from 6-7 years old the child is capable of performing all possible consonant combinations.

Therefore, we could phonetically (which it is the base of this method) say that the child is ready.

Moreover, the maturational approach is one of the key features for authors of Letrilandia.

Some of the prerequisites or capacities involved in the act of reading are:

- Regularity in the stroke (reading and writing).
- Discrimination of sizes and shapes.
- Space Maturation: laterality, up and down, in front and behind...
- Temporary maturation: sense of rhythm: recognize and play different rhythms.
- Memory: remember shorter and longer sentences.
- Breadth of vocabulary
- Articulation: phonetic discrimination.
Referring to writing, graphomotor maturation usually follows a fixed sequence and with a similar appearance amongst children: from 3 years of age scrawl is more controlled and starts to adjust to models: circle copy, straight, angles and zigzag or wavy lines. At 4 years old traces: perpendicular straight lines (crosses), directionality straight lines, squares and more sophisticated circles. At 5 years old: the layout of squares and rectangles is consolidated; draws triangles; inscribes diagonals. And at 6 years the child achieves tracing rhombus and crossed sinuous lines.

However, besides pure graphomotor activity, other skills are involved such as:

- Perception - visual discrimination.
- Right visual-auditory integration.
- Development of temporary structures.
- Auditory and visual memory.
- Correct laterality.
- Left-right directionality.

As mentioned, the author emphasizes that it is a maturational method and these necessary and previous aspects are constantly being worked.

Certainly, before the 6 years of age the perceptual world of children is not well developed and, as we have said on other occasions, Letrilandia is a synthetic method, which involves going from small to large, from the insignificant to significant. So the child must have acquired a symbolic reasoning, as understanding a nonsignificant concept (as a phoneme) requires a very high degree of symbolization.

We believe that taking into account the points exposed (acquisition of phonemes and maturing process), the expected age to start reading and writing according to the characteristics of the method is correct.
3.2 Analysis of the global-analytical method for literacy acquisition

3.2.1 Experiential learning (Method Doman)

We have confused this extraordinary curiosity about everything with a lack of ability to concentrate in any child aged between eighteen months and four or five years. We have watched our children carefully, but not always understood what their actions mean.

A child begins to learn right after birth. When they are six years old and start learning to read, they have already absorbed a huge amount of information, perhaps more than the one they will learn the rest of their life.

And most significantly, they will have learned a complete language and sometimes two, three or even more. The learning process in the early years takes place at an incredible speed. A little boy has a burning and unlimited desire to learn.

He is constantly learning and, logically, uses the five senses to be aware of everything and learn about the world around him. Sees, hears, feels, smells and tastes.

There is no other way to learn that through these five routes to the brain, and the child uses them all. If the use of the visual route offers the children the possibility of visualizing large words they will be learning to read, and with very few repetitions (between 10 and 15) will recognize each word they learned, in the same way in which they orally reproduce a word they have heard.

Visual stimuli are more easily retained because they are stable, can always have the same quality, are repeated in the same way every time you want and the visual pathway does not lose the ability to process them faithfully during the school period.

Auditory stimuli instead, like words, are ethereal—the vibration is lost in a few seconds, mixed with other environmental sounds, is different depending on the person they come from and, as children move away from childhood, perception, coding and decoding new phonemes decreases.

Learning to read is as easy as learning to speak.
The learning process should be principally fun, as it is the most fabulous game of life.

The eyes see, but do not understand what they see and the ears hear, but do not understand what they hear. Only the brain understands.

Both visual and auditory pathways travel through the brain where both messages are interpreted by the same brain process.

Doman proposed a first method based on the idea that a proper visual stimulation, with large words and very familiar contexts, is sufficient for very small children to discriminate words from the age in which they learn to speak and use significant concepts. The aim of this first method is to teach reading, individually and playfully, so that parents could carry it out the same way with their children even before they turn two years old.

His intervention methodology is based on maximizing the potential of the individual, focused on the early stage at which it begins, as many goals could not be reached later.

This methodology is developed by the bits of intelligence method (as in computers, bit of intelligence is the maximum amount of information that can be processed simultaneously in a second). Words, numbers, pictures of animals... are taught to children in groups of 10, several times a day (3 or 4 times) and each sheet is shown for one second. The child ends up recognizing the sheet: a draw, a word, a picture or a set of points.

**First stage: the sentence**

At this stage, the first task is to explain to children our way of working and where will the material we use to read and write emerge from.

The sentences will emerge from experiential issues within which all activities will be completed for learning reading and writing

**Sentence election:**

An experiential fact will take place (visiting the neighborhood, telling a story, partying at school...), and afterwards children will orally manifest the contents of that situation.
It is desirable that all of them express at least one sentence. Among these phrases we chose the most voted one. The phrase should be simple and concrete and should include action verbs.

Once the phrase has been chosen, we write it on the board and in two poster boards: one to put on the wall and the other to make collective games on the floor.

The way we present it is:

![The wind pulls out the yellow leaves of the trees.](Fig.7 Board presentation)

The oral expression goes after a lived situation.

The sense and understanding must be associated to everything that is read by the child.

To write a sentence it is mandatory to associate the idea, the sound and the graphic sign. Mind, sight, hearing and motor skills have to partner and cooperate to achieve the intended purpose.

So, before writing a sentence it is necessary:

- To have represented the idea.
- To have written this idea.
- To have pronounced it correctly.

**Symbol election:**

Each sentence must have a symbol. For their choice, children draw the sentence. Among these drawings, they choose one that will be our symbol.
We will make two drawings of the symbol chosen: one will be placed on the wall next to the appropriate phrase and the other one will be place on the floor to play collective games.

It is important to explain to the children the sense of the drawing symbol. It has to be as simple as possible.

That has distinct elements that allow, at the proper time (when we get the phrase from the two logical parts), a group to represent the subject and another to represent the predicate.

![The wind pulls out the yellow leaves of the trees.](image)

*Fig. 8 Chosen sentence Chosen symbol*

Temporo-spatial rythms and sound-rythm relationship:

The teacher articulates a phrase slowly spreading the words.

Children, collectively using the rulers, write the sentence said by the teacher, matching word-ruler, leaving approximately equal spaces.

We can find an example in Figure 9.

![The boy moves his head.](image)

*Fig. 9*
They will be told to put the materials from left to right, matching the rulers with the duration of the sound.

A man

Has lost

The bus

Instead of using rulers, this activity can be done with longer or shorter lines, using pens or markers.

We do all these activities every time we start working in a new sentence:

• Relate the phrase with its symbol, which be mixed with others. Given the phrase, draw the symbol.

• Given the symbol, write the phrase.

• Complete the symbol.

• Make labyrinths and puzzles with the symbol.

• Recognize the true sentence among the false ones.

• Replace the subject with his or her own name and with the name of one of his or her classmates.

• Identification and writing of the start of the phrase:
  • The boy the hip?
  • Moves the head?
  • ___ ________ the hunt?
• Identification y writing of the action:

• Given a disorganised sentence: cut, organise and stick according to the model.

More sentences:

From a learned phrase (during about a week) we repeat the process with a second sentence, and we do one sentence a week.

Cutting the sentence: subject-predicate

First, we cut the sentences in subject and predicate.

Once they have acquired this stage we cut the predicate into two parts: nucleus and complement.

This way multiple combinations can be done originating funny sentences.

Combination of sentences:

From sentences already known and learnt we start combining subjects and predicates

Second stage: the text

In the former stage the basis was the sentence. In this second one the main point is ‘the text’.

The text has to be created by the kids as a result of personal experiences or classroom observations.

The children can make it individually or collectively. If they do it individually, they can ask for help in those words they do not know.

In the case of working collective, they must develop it from an idea on the board.

As in the sentence stage, the text comes from experiential topics or from a circumstantial strongly experienced fact by children.

A free text can also be used, especially when they are better in writing texts. The teacher can also introduce some texts at a more advanced stage.
It must express the child thoughts and the way it is written has to be inspired in the spoken language of the same.

Short and clear. It will grow as the vocabulary of the class grows.

After an experiential fact (see choice of phrase), we produce the text. The children propose titles and choose the most voted ones.

Then we look for the beginning, middle and end, always with the ideas that children express orally.

Once we have the text, we write it on the board. They observe and realize that they already know some words.

The teacher reads it aloud as they follow it with their eyes.

Then we read sentence by sentence and make individual readings. We analyze every sentence and the text based on comprehensive questions.

Once they have understood and assimilated the text, we choose from the words four or five that are new, the most important ones (verbs and nouns). We underline them, they are the ‘key’ words that result in an envelope and must be learned by children.

When the text has been recognized by all (memorized), we turn to copy: they in their notebook with free illustration and us in a large cardboard or paper, highlighting the keywords and placing it on the wall.

A drawing is made on each keyword, which is written underneath, and also placed on the wall.

We can create books with the texts they have made.

**Third stage: the word**

We are at a time when children make their own combinations, depending on their vocabulary.

An activity we have to maximize is to make analogies. Keep on grouping words by their similarities, so that they continue themselves with their findings and investigations.
The aptitude for analysis is related to the intelligence and interest the student has. Not all children reach this analysis ability at the same time, so we have to take this into account and not hurry.

A word just can be read under two conditions:

a) It belongs to the children vocabulary.

b) It provides the possibility of comparing it with other words already known.

**Visual and auditory perception:**

It is essential to work both visual and auditory perception, as we can improve that way the discrimination of texts and words.

It is, most of all, in words discrimination where we are going to need that visual perception.

Apart from working on words analysis and decipher, we keep on working on the text, the keywords (as it has been indicated in its stage) and building reading books with the collective, individual and teacher proposed texts.

4. **USING TECHNOLOGIES TO SUPPORT READING ACQUISITION**

They have emerged in recent years a lot of educational applications which, through presenting the content in the form of play, let our children learn writing and reading in a simple, fun and interactive way. There are applications for computers, tablets or phones that have the essential requirements to fulfil the purpose for which have been created: to help youngsters to learn to read and write, to develop cognitive and communication skills, to acquire vocabulary, improve memory and concentration, to spark the imagination, etc.

**Learn to read with Pipo:**

Pipo collection currently consists of thousands of games of all content and educational levels. It maintains an accredited recognition for its quality and effectiveness, both to entertain and to get the kids like to learn —and actually learn. Millions of children in all Spanish-speaking countries, and many others, play and learn with Pipo every day.
In June 2004 Cibal opened in Internet Multimedia section Pipoclub Online games with a first catalogue of 500 educational activities. After the significant investment month after month with the creation and production of new plays perfectly structured and educational content levels they have reached a total of 4911 games.

**Dec dec:**

It is a comprehensive educational application, designed for the little ones learn to spell, linking sounds with spellings and start writing. Aimed at children aged between 3 and 12 years, and developed with the advice of teachers and professors, from December to December highlights other applications for its design and functionality. It is ideal for mother tongue and to acquire vocabulary and knowledge of other languages, because we can choose which language to practice Spanish, Catalan, English UK, English US, Russian and French. It also allows us to choose the level of difficulty you want to play and track use or to facilitate responses. Once chosen our preferences, the game will start with spelling and individual dictation, with letter writing stick. At the end of the exercises (with voiceovers native speakers of each language), the program presents an album of achievements and rewards that serve as an incentive to keep practicing. Finally, say that is 100% safe, no advertising of any kind or integrated sales, so that children can play freely and safely. December-December is not for Android; only for iOS, and it is a free application.

**Digital Auca: "tales to dream, play and learn."**

This is the slogan of Auca Digital, a digital publisher that was born with the intention of bringing the world of reading to children. As they say themselves on their website, "making reading a fun experience to read a pleasure". From this premise they have created an application with the same name offers interactive educational quality books with stories to favour the intellectual and emotional development of smaller and, at the same time, arouse their interest in reading. Additionally, those who have created this site are specialists in the field. Digital Auca proposes unpublished stories always have a useful teaching behind. Children can interact with a lot of elements while reading the different stories that have a high degree of customization: 3 reading levels (to find the one that best fits each boy), 3 fonts (school, printing or stick), reading comprehension activities and even sound effects. One of its main strengths is the graphic design of the stories, with a very elaborate illustrations that invite children to repeat.
Auca Digital has a composite collection for now 8 titles, which are available in multiple languages: Spanish, Catalan, Basque, Galician, English, French, German, Italian and Portuguese. The application is available only for iOS and is free. Of course, once inside, there is a book free trial, but the others are paid.

**ABC Kit:**

ABC Kit is an application so that children learn the alphabet by phonemes. It has three different modes: the "Learn" mode, in which each letter is associated with an animal or object; the "Listen", where you can listen carefully to the phonetic spelling of each, and how "Write", where you can write different letters both in letter post as school letter, following a marked line mode. ABC Kit, which is available in Castilian, Catalan and English, was chosen in 2011 by the App Store (Apple) of Spain as the third best application for iPad, as it is a simple and entertaining app, but very effective. It is in Spanish and iTunes price is € 1.79.

**LudiletrasPro:**

Ludiletras literacy is a tool developed by the pedagogues of Montserrat College of Barcelona and the publisher Tekman Books. Its aim, learning reading and writing of children 3 to 6 years. It is a very educational application, proof of this is that many schools across the country are using it for some time. It is free, in Spanish and iOS. The application follows the successful formula of many others, to incorporate play in learning. Ludiletras presents the alphabet as a game: students associate each letter with a gesture and a word, making it easy to identify the number of letters of a word because relate to a gesture, from a natural form of syllabic phase alphabetic. They should also write the lyrics first, and then whole words, by type of school letter (or linked). The program also has a number of cartoon characters that will accompany children throughout the process.

*A correct learning of literacy is very important in our society, as it will mainly depend on the future development of our children. In this paper we have presented only some of the many tools that can currently be found; most of them, as we have seen, are based on the successful formula of mixing education with the game, an aspect that has become essential for teachers, educators and, in parallel, for parents.*
CONCLUSIONS

On the one hand, ‘Letrilandia’ is a phonetic-analytical method which develops different characteristics:

- The ability of articulation and pronunciation of words.
- The shape and sound of the letters learning, that begins with vowels.
- Phonic combination of vowels and consonants.
- Exercises consisting of discrimination, recognition, substitution, omission of phonemes in many words.
- Recognition of words through phonemes.
- Association between signifier and meaning and reading.

Nevertheless, there are still objections:

- Difficulty in applying it to every language because of the letter / sound adaptation.
- It requires the recognition of words outside the understanding, which favors the mechanical reading.
- It is difficult to differentiate between deaf and voiced phonemes.
- The similarity between sounds obliged to use something else, usually gestures.

Reading and writing can begin to be worked since the 3 years of age, as it is learnt and built from the inside, the child is active in his or her own learning. Each of them has their own learning pace, so we have to take into account the developmental stages of children and their way of learning and grasping every moment. Thus, we can also conclude that the reading and writing learning is always better from significant elements of the language.

The didactic material is a dispensable material and the error, as in every life-aspect, is an indispensable step for reflexion.
Additionally, motivation is indeed important, we have to try that the child lives his or her approach to reading and writing in a pleasant and ludic way, and not as a hard, boring and compulsory process.

We have to encourage their interest and curiosity and it is true that Letrilandia gets it creating characters and stories.

But for motivate children to read and write they have to live experiences of reading and writing. We have to read and write for them, so they also want to do it. The child will learn through imitation and participation in adult activities. We have to bear in mind that the workshops are not just school related; we have to highlight the importance of the social adult use of the language.

On the other hand, the global method demands the repetition of different activities several times a day, which means daily intervention.

It is very strict referring to the accomplishment of those routines. That is why a person who decides to implement the method, has to be serious with it.

Children can write and read from the beginning of schooling, it should not be confused with a learning-acceleration or learning-stimulation program.

Traditional methods tend to retard the learning of the written language.

It does not make sense to stop or retard the learning of those children, but neither accelerates the process or aspirates to teach every child to read and write precociously.

Every boy and girl has their own rhythm, previous experience, type of motivation and level of adaptation to school situation.

Three, four and five year old children should not be seated in the desk, reading and writing all day.

It would be a mistake to rely on this approach to defend a greater school demand. We must encourage children, offer them the possibility to access to written language, but not torment, classify or ask them all the same knowledge.

But there are objections:

Learning reading significantly slows down because as instead of memorizing 28 phonemes we have to memorise countless words.
Learning phonemes, although it is not the basis of the method, must be learned because we must not only read familiar and known words, but also the ones which are new and those can only be read by decoding phonemes.

The method lacks a fourth stage which is to decode the phoneme, as fundamental as the others.

The mixed methods that use elements and techniques from the analytic and synthetic methods, the ones which try to get closer to the child interests and respect their learning processes, are methods that require the teacher a lot of work and the development of the child’s motivation. They come from significant elements and constantly go from analysis to synthesis and the other way round.

The adequate reading and writing learning attitude is the one based on a mixed methodology:

Which comes from the idea that reading is understanding and writing is communicating, but decoding and coding is learned since the very beginning (go from understanding and communicating to decoding and coding).

It consists on combining the two learnings (they have to be united) as one is not selective from each other but complementary, and both are needed for a good reading and understanding.

REFERENCES


MODULE 3

READING DIFFICULTIES AND SUPPORT

INTRODUCTION

Първо се учим да четем, после цял живот четем, за да учим. Защо обаче някои деца срещат трудности да се научат да четат? Защо е толкова важно да им бъде оказана навременна и адекватна подкрепа в усилията им да преодолеят затрудненията си?

Ако детето има богат речник и може добре да се изразява вербално, това не означава, че то лесно и безпроблемно ще се научи да чете и/или да пише. Справянето с академичните задачи изисква съгласуваност на всички основни мисловни процеси, в условията на учебната среда, където изискванията и стресът са много по-големи в сравнение с годините преди започване на училище.

Всяко дете, за да се научи да чете, трябва да премине във времето през последователност от стъпки, като на всеки етап трябва да овладява ново умение, което ще му осигури успешно постигане на крайната цел, която се асоциира не само с формалното разпознаване на буквите и думите, но и със способността за разбиране и тълкуване на информацията, която чете. Важен критерий за нивото на успеха в този процес е степента, до която детето използва наученото и както прилага тези си умения (да чете и пише) самостоятелно, извън дейностите, осъществявани с участието и подкрепата на възрастните (учители, родители и др.)

1. PREREQUISITES FOR DEVELOPMENT OF GOOD READING SKILLS

1.1. Perceptions

1.1.1. Visual

Visual perceptions start to develop from the birth. But it needs some time to allow the eyes to focus, to practice eye movements, to form binocular vision, perception of perspective (depth), hand-eye coordination and so on.
When we talk about visual perceptions we do not mean problems with vision, but the skill, which is associated with the perception of an object. This is a skill to recognise a form, no matter what size or colour, or material it is, or what is its location; a skill to distinguish that form from any other form, and the perceived visual information to be remembered (stored in the memory) and retrieved when necessary.

Visual tracking (the ability to follow a moving object with the eyes) is another ability that is very important for the development of the learning skills in any aspect.

The process of reading acquisition includes the ability to recognise the letters – their shape and orientation, visual memorisation of the sequence of letters that form every word, and the ability to follow the linear structure of the text. That’s why any deficit in the development of the visual perception may result in difficulties with reading, like problems with letter recognition; substitution or disposition of the letters within the words and/or phrases. This leads to difficulties with the decoding which is the first stage of reading.

1.1.2. Auditory

Auditory perception is the ability to "structure the auditory world and select those sounds which are immediately pertinent to adjustment" (Myklebust, 1954). Children with auditory perceptual deficits can hear sounds but are unable to recognize them for meaning (Berry and Eisenson, 1956). As the auditory perception is the ability to recognize or interpret what is heard, it plays as important a role in reading as visual perception.

When we talk about auditory perceptions we need to mention four main aspects of it:

- Auditory discrimination – it is the ability to hear similarities and differences between sounds.
- Auditory differentiation - the ability to select and attend to relevant auditory stimuli and ignore the irrelevant.
- Auditory blending (also known as auditory analysis and synthesis) - the ability to synthesise individual sounds which form a word.
- Auditory sequencing – it is the ability to remember the order of individual sounds in a given stimulus.

1.1.3. Phonological perceptions and phonological awareness

Phonological perception is the unconscious cognitive processing of language sounds within specific areas of the brain. From the other side, phonological awareness concerns the conscious ability to notice that unique differences exist between spoken words; that not all the sounds are the same. Then we come to the concept of phonemic awareness which is more specific and encompasses the ability to perceive the smaller sound segments of spoken words, and to be aware of the differences between these phonemes, which can be manipulated and substituted to form different words.

For example: if we have the words “best” and “test”, the phonemic awareness helps us to recognise the sounds in these two words [b] or [t], [e], [s], [t], and identify that the first phoneme is the differentiating sound.

Knowing that the letter “t” represents the sound [t] is not enough to evaluate the phonemic awareness as good. It is necessary to understand that [t] is the first sound in the word “test”, and it is the same as the last sound of this word and the last sound in the word “best”. So, one should be able to identify each sound in the word, the place in the word a particular sound is situated, and to compare the sounds and their positions in different words.

The phonological processor usually works unconsciously when we listen and speak. It is designed to extract the meaning of what is said, not to notice the speech sounds in the words. It is designed to do its job automatically in the service of efficient communication. But reading and spelling require a level of metalinguistic speech that is not natural or easily acquired. (Moats and Tolman, 2009).
1.2. Memory

1.2.1. Visual

Visual Memory is the ability to remember for immediate recall the characteristics of a given object or form. It describes the relationship between perceptual processing and the encoding, storage and retrieval of the resulting neural representations.

Visual memory is a form of memory which preserves some characteristics of our senses pertaining to visual experience. It occurs over a broad time range spanning from eye movements to years in order to visually navigate to a previously visited location (Berryhill, 2008). We are able to place in memory visual information which resembles objects, places, faces, etc. in a mental image. Sometimes the experience of visual memory is referred to as the mind's eye through which we can retrieve from our memory a mental image of original objects, places, animals or people (Berryhill, 2008).

1.2.2. Auditory

Auditory memory is the ability to process information presented orally, analyse it mentally, and store it to be recalled later.

Auditory (sometimes referred to as echoic) memory is one of the human's sensory memory stores; a component that is specific to retaining auditory perceived information. Unlike visual memory, in which our eyes can scan the stimuli over and over, it is impossible to do with the auditory stimuli. Overall, auditory memories are stored for slightly longer periods of time than iconic (visual) memories (Psychology Glossary). Auditory stimuli are received by the ear one at a time before they can be processed and understood. For instance, hearing information on the radio is very different from reading the same information in a newspaper. We can only hear the spoken information once at a given time, while the written one can be read over and over again. It can be said that the auditory memory is like a "holding tank" concept, because a sound is unprocessed (or held back) until the following sound is heard, and only then can it be made meaningful (Clark, 1987). This particular sensory store is capable of storing large amounts of auditory information that is only retained for a short period of time (3–4 seconds). This echoic sound resonates in the mind.
and is replayed for this brief amount of time shortly after the presentation of auditory stimuli (Radvansky, 2005).

1.2.3. Short-term

The idea of the division of memory into short-term memory and long-term memory dates back to the 19th century. A classical model of memory developed in the 1960s assumed that all memories pass from a short-term to a long-term store after a small period of time. This model is referred to as the "modal model" and has been most famously detailed by Atkinson and Shiffrin (Atkinson and Shiffrin, 1968).

Short-term memory is the ability to store information in mind in an active, readily available state for a limited period of time, such as visual images (i.e. form or a face of a person) and/or aural/auditory information (i.e. phone numbers somebody said or sentences). Information can remain that way for a few seconds. This kind of remembering is the result of a single or a very short perception of information and functions without conscious effort to remember, but with preconditions for future playback (recall). In the short-term memory are stored only the essential elements of the perceived images or words.

The capacity of short-term memory is very individual, and when it is full, the stored information is partially replaced by the new one.

Short-term memory plays an important role, because thanks to it, we can process a huge amount of information, saving the potentially useful and forgetting the rest.

1.2.4. Long-term

Long-term memory determines a person's ability to retain information for longer periods of time. Long-term memories can last for just a few days, or for many years.

Long-term memory does not begin to function right after the material has been seen or heard, but after some period of time. One must finish with one process (recall) to start the other (playback), because these two processes are not compatible and their mechanisms completely different.
The capacity of long-term memory is virtually unlimited, as the time for storing information in it. Access to information in long-term memory and ability to intentional and unintentional remember depends on how well it is organised. It is converted continuously and there are suggestions that it is unassailable, and the difficulties in its reproduction are linked to violations of access to it. On how easy we can access the information stored in the long-term memory depends what we call “helpfulness of the memory”.

There are many different forms of long-term memories. These memories aren't formed and retained in a single part of the brain; instead, the process of creating and storing long-term memories is spread throughout multiple regions. There are two major subdivisions of the long-term memory - explicit memory and implicit memory. Explicit memories are those that we consciously remember (events in our life or some particular facts). On the other hand - implicit memories are those that we use to perform actions without thinking about them (like swimming or riding a bike – after we once learned how to do it, we remembered how to do it, and now we do it without conscious thought).

1.2.5. Semantic

Semantic memory can be seen as one of the aspects of the long-term memory.

The Canadian psychologist Endel Tulving distinguishes three types of memory - procedural, episodic and semantic (Tulving, 1985). Procedural memory supports activities such as tying shoes or cycling - activities that we do not have to learn how to do many times – if we have learnt to ride a bicycle we keep this knowledge for the whole our life, no matter how many years we have not ridden a bike.

Episodic memory preserves our personal experiences and their sequence in the time. Using this memory we can remember our first day in school, or the day we moved to a new house.

Semantic memory is the ability to remember facts out of the context. For example we remember that France is in Europe, water boils at 100 degrees C°, or dolphins are mammals but we don’t need to know when we heard/read these facts for the first time. Semantic memory represents also our knowledge of
words, symbols and concepts we use when guided conversation or learn in any subject. It is used to recall the definitions of words and concepts. Thankfully to it we can understand information we hear, instructions, school subjects, like math and history, and the texts we read.

1.3. Spatial orientation

The human brain is a remarkable organ. It has the ability to reason, create, analyse, and process a huge amount of information every day. It gives us the ability to move around in the environment using our innate sense of direction. This skill is called spatial orientation, and it is very useful in our every-day life. Spatial orientation is crucial for adapting to new environments and getting from one point to another. Without it, we would walk around in endless circles, would get lost, but also – would have a lot of other problems we don’t even suspect (Maxwell, 2013).

In early childhood the children accept everything that surrounds them according to their body, body movement and its location in relation to other objects. The early childhood movement patterns like rolling, creeping, crawling, rocking and later walking, running, climbing, swinging all build a sensory “map” in the child’s brain of where he is in space at any particular time (Murphy, 2013). Spatial orientation is one of the key capacities which must be mature if a child is to learn to read and write easily. This ability facilitates the formation of children’s school readiness and the acquisition of reading and writing skills. With time they learn to recognize letters, numbers and other graphic symbols as they differentiate into space and pay attention to their distinctive characteristics – shape, components, location and direction in space. Otherwise, if a child has poorly developed spatial orientation, it may result in letter reversals, poor memory for shapes and words, problems with reading, writing and spelling.

1.4. Sequencing

Sequencing refers to the person’s ability to perceive visually and/or auditory items in a particular order, to remember this sequence and to be able to retrieve it later. This is how we can say the days of the week, or the months of
the year, or the letters in alphabetical order, or even a recipe for cooking our favourite dish.

When we need to remember or reconstruct the order of sounds in a word or syllable we use our auditory sequencing ability. One example is saying or writing "ephelant" for "elephant."

Another relation between sequencing and reading is the specific skill to control the eye-movement from left to right, following the text lines. During this process our eyes have to perceive letters in each word one by one from left to right, to recognise them, to combine in the correct order, so our brain could read and understand the word. Reading the words in the correct order we can understand the meaning of the sentences, paragraphs, etc. Sequencing ability is also very important when we need to re-produce what we have read in the correct logical order.

1.5. Attention

Attention is the behavioural and cognitive process of selectively concentrating on a discrete aspect of information, while ignoring other perceiveable information. Attention has also been referred to as the allocation of limited processing resources (Anderson, 2004).

The basic properties of attention concern: fastness, concentration, distribution, switching and attention volume. It is possible that one of these aspects is well developed while another one is not in such a good level.

1.5.1. Concentration

Very often these two concepts are wrapped together, although they differ from each other.

Fastness is a time characteristic of attention and refers to the duration of attraction of attention to the same object.

Concentration of attention is the ability to focus the required object, its components, ability to understand the task. A child with good concentration ability has also good observation, organization. Conversely, those who have not developed this ability are usually easily distractive and messy. Development of
concentration required conscious efforts and results in the individual’s ability to perceive, understand and learn new information.

We all have the ability to concentrate some of the time. But at other times our thoughts are scattered, and our minds race from one thing to another. Our ability to concentrate depends on: commitment, enthusiasm for the task (motivation), skill at doing the task, our emotional, physical and psychological state at the time, our environment.

1.5.2. Sustainability

Attention stability is how long you can stay focused on the object. Stability is the “duration” of voluntary attention. It is defined by the period of time you can keep your attention at its initial quality level. Stability depends on your physical state, interest, and motivation (you can cope with interesting work in the morning better than with boring stuff in the evening when you are tired).

1.5.3. Switching

Switching or redirection we call the ability to re-focus the attention from one object or activity to another one when necessary. This action can be done unconsciously when, while doing something our attention is suddenly “caught” by something else. But much more important is the ability intentionally to switch your attention from one stimulus to another. The special feature here is that the individual makes a conscious evaluation of the newly occurred stimuli and finding that in a changing situation it has greater significance than the previous one, the individual switches his attention to the new object/action.

Any shift of attention requires voluntary efforts. Their level is determined by a number of conditions, among them - the inherent mobility of nerve processes of activation (excitation) and deactivation (impeding). The higher the mobility level is - the easier is the switching of the attention.

CONCLUSIONS

To achieve good (accuracy and speed) and effective (high level of understanding) reading it is necessary that any of the skills mentioned above to
be developed at the appropriate level. Deficiency in any of these skills leads to difficulties in reading.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Underdevelopment of…</th>
<th>How does it affect the reading acquisition?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| **Visual Perceptions** | - Recognition of the letters – difficulties to see the similarities and differences in the shape and the orientation of the letters (“m” – “n”; “b” – “d”, etc.);
- Problems with different fonts – a child can recognize “g”, but not “g”, or can recognize the capital letter and at the same time to have difficulties recognizing the lower case letter (D – d, M – m, Q – q, etc.). |
| **Auditory Perceptions** | - Difficulties with the perception of auditory-submitted text;
- Difficulties to divide word into composing them sounds or to put sounds together in order to form a word;
- Difficulties to define the first and the last sounds of a word;
- Difficulties to differentiate similarly sounding words (can’t “hear” the difference between “big” and “pig” or “ship” and “sheep”);
- Problems with reading comprehension. |
| **Phonological Perceptions/Phonological Awareness** | - Problems with blending the individual sounds in a word, such as “c-a-t”. (The child may know the individual phonemes but simply cannot put them together.);
- Problems breaking apart an unknown word by syllables and blending it, such as “te-le-phone”; |
- Difficulties with decoding and reading fluency;
- Problems with reading comprehension because of the poor reading technique.

**Visual Memory**
- Difficulties to reproduce a sequence of visual stimuli (like letters in a word);
- Difficulty in remembering the overall visual appearance of words or the letter sequence of words for reading and spelling;
- Every time has to decode any word, even the small ones (lack of pattern recognition).

**Auditory Memory**
- Problems to understand what the words mean, (can show a delayed grasp of language).
- Problems with understanding and following verbal instructions

**Short-term Memory**
- Problems with decoding
- Difficulty to sufficiently register (or think about) ideas or information while reading;
- Difficulties to hold what is read in mind, (often forgets the beginning of a sentence or paragraph by the time he/she gets to the end; in some cases it may happen even with longer words);
- Problems with storing the visual-spatial information (like sequence of letters in a word)

**Long-term Memory**
- Inability to store and/or retrieve information after having read the text;
- Difficulties with retrieving the sequences of graphemes and phonemes;
- Difficulties with understanding what is read.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Semantic Memory</th>
<th>- Problems with understanding words and concepts which results in low level of reading comprehension</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sequencing</td>
<td>- Problems with eye-movement and following the linear structure of the text (missing lines; “jumping” back and forth across the text); - Gaps in the text perception, and as a result poor understanding of what is read; - At the technical level – problems with decoding – substitution and omission of letters, or shifting their place; guessing words instead of reading them. As a result – slow, choppy, incorrect reading, changing the meaning of the words/sentences, and low level of understanding.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Attention</td>
<td>- Problems with decoding and respecting the punctuation - Problems with reading fluency - Problems with reading comprehension - Rapid fatigue - Loss of motivation and interest</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Any problems with perception, spatial orientation, memory and/or attention that a young learner may have lead, to one degree or another, to problems with acquiring good reading technique and cause difficulty with comprehension. If a child finds reading difficult, if he can’t understand what he reads, it is obvious that he will not feel any pleasure of reading. If in addition the child can’t see improvement in his reading technique or in the level of comprehension, despite his efforts, he will very soon lose his interest in reading and motivation to read.
2. DIFFICULTIES A CHILD MAY FACE WHILE LEARNING TO READ

Learning to read is quite a complex task that requires coordination of the eye muscles, so they can follow a line of print; good spatial orientation to interpret letters and words; well-developed visual memory to retain the meaning of letters and sight words. It requires a sequencing ability, understanding of the structure of sentences and grammar, and the ability to categorise and analyse. In addition to all these skills, the brain has to be able to integrate visually perceived cues (the letters and letter patterns) with memory and associate them with specific sounds. The sounds must then be associated with specific meanings. In order to achieve good comprehension, the reader must retain the meaning of the words while the whole sentence or passage is read. A disruption in any of these processes causes difficulties in reading.

Many kids struggle with reading – about 10 million children in the world have difficulties learning to read, no matter what language they speak or what alphabets they use. The good news is that most of them can overcome their difficulties if they receive appropriate treatment at early ages.

Reading difficulties occur on a continuum, meaning that there is a wide range of students who experience reading difficulties. There are students who are diagnosed with a reading-related disability but there is an even larger group of students (without diagnoses) who still require targeted reading assistance (Drummond, 2009).

When a teacher should do, if in the class there is a student with reading difficulties, is:

• At first, to try to find out the cause for the difficulty – the child may speech problems (late speech development, problems with pronunciation, speech structure, etc), it could be because of bilingualism, or due to dyslexia.

• Secondly, the teacher has to try to accommodate a student's weaknesses and build upon his/her strengths, adapting his/her teaching style to the learning preferences of the student.

• On third place, the teacher has to provide targeted instruction to form/improve all those skills/abilities that are required for developing good reading skills.
• The teacher should work in close collaboration with specialists (who can work with the child out of the class/school) and with parents.

Problems with reading acquisition may be divided into two groups: difficulties with the technique of reading, and difficulties with reading comprehension.

2.1. Problems with reading technique

When we talk about difficulties related to the reading techniques, the problems may be observed in one or in several of the following aspects:

2.1.1. Visual differentiation of the letters – problems with letter recognition; substitution or disposition of the letters within the words and/or phrases. Children struggle decoding the words, especially if they are longer or not so often used.

2.1.2. Letter – Sound correspondence – problems with visual recognition of graphemes, their position; number of elements of the letters and/or the way they are combined within the word. The opposite problem is observed in writing – difficulties to hear the sound to match it to the respective grapheme and to write down this grapheme correctly.

Letter-sound correspondence refers to the identification of sounds associated with individual letters and letter combinations. This is the point in a child's development of literacy where phonemic awareness begins to overlap with orthographic awareness and reading.

2.1.3. Storing in the Memory – problems with decoding longer words, and semantical problems. When reading students must be able to look at a word, form an image of that word in their minds and be able to recall the appearance of the word later. Students with good visual memory will recognize that same word later in their readers or other texts and will be able to recall the appearance of the word to spell it (Cusimano, 2001). Those who have not developed their visual memory skills cannot readily reproduce a sequence of visual stimuli. They frequently experience difficulty in remembering the overall visual appearance of words or the letter sequence of words for reading and spelling.
a) **Blending the sounds into words** – Sound blending is the ability to build words from individual sounds by blending the sounds together in sequence. Blending is essential in reading and it is an example of a phonological awareness skill. In order to be able to read words, a child must

- know the sounds for each of the letters
- blend these sounds together to pronounce the word.

The child may know the individual phonemes and may not have difficulty to spell (for ex. “b-a-l-l”) but simply cannot put them together to form the word (“ball”).

2.1.4. **Reading fluency** – Fluency does not mean only to decode all the words in a text accurately, but also to read with proper speed, and with expression. Fluency is important because it makes the connection between word recognition (decoding) and comprehension (which is the initial aim of reading). Fluent reading sounds natural, as if one is speaking. Of course, nobody reads fluently from the very beginning. Firstly the child should be able effortlessly decode the words, then he needs good instructions, a lot of exercises and enough time to be able to do it relatively fast, and then – he should know and respect the punctuation. Young readers, but also those who have not yet developed fluency, read slowly, word by word; with many fault-starts, big pauses between words; don’t respect punctuation. In other words - their oral reading sounds choppy.

2.1.5. **Punctuation** – Punctuation is a worldwide accepted system of signs or symbols that given to a reader to show how a sentence is constructed, how it should be read and makes the meaning clear. The punctuation marks don’t depend on the language or the alphabet we use.

Appropriate punctuation acts like a set of “road signs” to guide the reader through the ideas expressed in the text. If drivers don’t respect the road signs, the traffic would be chaotic and out of control. The same happens to reading if not respecting the punctuation. Punctuation marks can tell the reader when to slow down, when to speed up and when to stop.

If a child is not aware about the punctuation, or does not respect the punctuation signs – it directly affects the level of comprehension.
2.2. Problems with Reading Comprehension

Comprehension is the ultimate goal of reading. Everyone agrees that reading comprehension is not a simple matter of recognizing individual words, or even of understanding each individual word as our eyes pass over it. All models of comprehension recognize the need for readers to build up a mental representation of text, a process that requires integration across a range of sources of information, from lexical features through to knowledge concerning events in the world (e.g., Garnham, 2001; Gernsbacher, 1990; Kintsch, 1998).

There are several reasons for difficulties a reader may have with comprehension. Good reading technique is one of the main prerequisites for good level of comprehension. One wrong word read, inability to stand semantic parts of the sentence can cause a problem with understanding and interpretation.

As a result of bypassing the rows children perceive choppy text without realizing that they read individual, unrelated moments of it and thus alter the basic meaning of individual facts, and sometimes the text as a whole. When a child experiences reading difficulty in addition to the word recognition and the accuracy of reading (replacement or disposition of letters, syllables, change of the words) the speed of reading is also affected (slow and choppy reading). Above all, however, these difficulties affect children's ability to perceive and comprehend reading information as a result of which they do not understand the content. The low level of comprehension deprives them of satisfaction from reading and demotivates them to read more.

Another reason is the “readability” of the text. If the text is not properly selected according to the age and the reading skills of the students, they may not be able to understand its meaning. Multisyllabic or rarely used words, long complicated sentences may cause additional difficulties to young readers.

Determining cause might be a poor vocabulary of a student. Nowadays children don’t read a lot, and if they were not read to since the very young age, it affects their passive vocabulary and also may be a reason for lower level of comprehension.

Difficulties may be observed in the understanding of reading, but also in the knowledge and use of grammar rules, semantics of words and their adequate use. As a result, the information in the reading material can’t be effectively perceived; stored and very often there are difficulties in following the logical and temporal sequence when it is required to interpret it.
A big role in understanding is played by the visual and auditory memory.

Auditory memory involves being able to take in information that is presented orally, to process that information, store it in one's mind and then recall what one has heard. Basically, it involves the skills of attending, listening, processing, storing, and recalling. Because students with auditory memory weaknesses pick up only bits and pieces of what is being said during a classroom lecture, they make sense of only little of what is said by the teacher. Afterwards they are able to recall only a small amount or none of what was said (Cusimano, 2009).

Children with poor visual memory may struggle with comprehension. They often subvocalize as they read because they must rely on auditory input to help them compensate. They may have difficulty remembering what a word looks like or fail to recognize the same word on a different line or page.

3. HOW TO HELP

This part of the Module is developed based on the experience of the specialists of Asociacia Dyslexia – Bulgaria who have worked for many years with children who have reading difficulties. All the examples are real, only the names are changed in order to keep the confidentiality.

3.1. In Case of Problems with Reading Technique

a) The child has difficulties to recognize and to name the letters

T. is 7 years old, studying in the 1st grade. At the end of the school year, when it is supposed that all children has to be able to read independently short texts, T. can recognise only about 15 of all 30 letters in the Bulgarian alphabet. He has difficulty to differentiate similarly looking letters, like “у” – “щ”, “и” – “ц” (Cyrillic alphabet), or to even remember some of the letters and often asks “which this letter was?”.

Similar difficulties children who use Latin alphabet experience with “b” - “d”, “p” – “q”. Letters “n” - “m” are problematic in both alphabets.
How could the teacher help?

- Train the visual perceptions and visual memory of the children, using different games (Memory, Domino, Lotto, etc.)
- Teach children to find differences and similarities in different objects then use this skills to find differences and similarities in the letters (shapes and orientation)
- Give children a model to follow when shaping/modeling the letters so they can use it also to correct their own visual perceptions

What parents to be advised to do at home?

- Use different materials to help child to learn letters (modeling clay, dough, foam, sponges, sand, etc.)
- Use every occasion (shopping, walk, watching TV, etc.) to check your child’s knowledge of letters
- Use the space in the home (furniture, doors, walls) to place letters (especially those child has not automatized yet) – let the child be able to see them all the time

Suggested exercises and games:

- **Magic Letters** – with white oil pastel draw a letter on a white sheet of paper. The child is asked, using water colours to colour the shape (the letter could be written within the square, triangle or circle) and to see what will happen. While colouring he/she will see how a letter is “coming out”. Then the child can be asked to draw something whose name starts with the same letter (i.e. if it is the letter “c” he can draw a cat, or a car…).
- **Modeling Letters** – you can use playing dough, modeling clay, or even “normal” dough. Give the child a sample of printed letters and ask him to model them, following the sample. For the “problematic” letters the child can make some additional models that he associates with the letter (e.g. a butterfly for “B”).
b) The child has difficulties to match letters with sounds

M. is 8 years old. Teachers report he has difficulties to match letters with the respective sounds. Boy’s parents share that M. learnt the alphabet well before he started school, was able to recognise all letters, and to name them. That’s why parents didn’t suspect their son would have difficulties to learn to read. At the beginning M. was unable to read even very simple words. It looks like he all the time forgets the letters, although seeing them separately (not as part of the words he names them instantly). Matching the sounds with letters (during the dictations) is even harder.
How could the teacher help?

✓ Train the visual and auditory differentiation skills of the children, using different games.

✓ Make dictations of separate letters, gradually increasing the speed.

✓ Use different games to train children’s ability to quickly switch their attention.

✓ Get children to know and be aware of different printing styles, so facing a differently looking text it not to cause additional difficulties to sound the letters.

What parents to be advised to do at home?

✓ Play games when the child has to name the first/last sound of different words; to list as many words as possible starting with some letter/sound/syllable; to spell the words he hear, etc.

✓ Use any opportunity to train the child to quickly name the letters (randomly shown to him), and to show the letters that match sounds he hear.

Suggested exercises and games:

✓ **Worksheet 3** – Alliteration Games

✓ **Guess the object** – The adult (teacher or parent) says “I think about an object. Its name starts with “…”) (e.g. with “c”). The child starts guessing: “it’s a car”. “No, says the adult, it has no wheels”. Then the child suggests another word: “cat”. “No, it has no mustache.”, and so on, until the child says the correct word (in this case it could be “cow”). The idea is to make the child to think of as many words with the same first sound as possible. In order the child not to feel cheated (not to think that the adult all the time changes the word), you can prepare respective pictures.

✓ **Alphabet Match** – an online learning game to help children to practice letter – sound correspondence – [http://www.abcya.com/alphabet_matching_game](http://www.abcya.com/alphabet_matching_game) - this one is in English, but there are similar games in almost every language.
c) The child has difficulties to blend the sounds into a word

N. is an intelligent 8 years old girl. She has no problem to recognise and name all letters. Likes school and actively participates during the classes. Neither teachers nor parents had suspected difficulties before children came to the stage in the reading acquisition process when they needed to start “real” reading. N. easily matches the letters and sounds, but finds it extremely difficult to blend two sounds in order to form the simplest syllable. Seeing the letter combination “ma”, N. would numerous times repeat “m”-“a”, “m”-“a” …., without being able to pronounce “ma”.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>How could the teacher help?</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Don’t start teaching blending before you are sure that children easily recognise all the letters and have no problems to “sound” them.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• In case a child has trouble with blending, make him to “sing” the words, keeping the sounds together.</td>
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<tr>
<td>• If the child is separating sounds instead of smoothly blending them together, stop him immediately. Don’t let the child practice incorrect skills!</td>
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</tbody>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>What parents to be advised to do at home?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Show the child how you can from two or three letters form a meaningful word. Pronounce each sound separately, then blend the sounds so the child can hear the word. Ask the child to the same. After that change one of the letters in the word in order to form a new one, and ask the child to sound the letters and then to pronounce the whole word. Go on until the child is able to blend the sounds independently.</td>
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**Suggested exercises and games:**

- **Form a Word** – The adult (teacher or parent) names slowly the sounds of the letters. The child should listen carefully and after the adult stops, to pronounce the whole word (e.g. [d]-[e]-[s]-[k]; the child should say [desk]). Start with small words, increasing the difficulty of the exercise – in case the blending is highly problematic, start with 2-letter words.

- **More ideas** for games to train blending -
  - [http://pbskids.org/lions/games/blending.html](http://pbskids.org/lions/games/blending.html)

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d) Lack of fluency in reading; low speed of reading

K. and S. are same age, and both have problems with reading. But the problems are not exactly the same. K. reads in “chops”, especially longer words. S., from the other side, uses another technique for reading words he find difficult – at first he whispers them to himself, and only then says them aloud. The reading of both children does not sound “natural”- slow, the rhythm is uneven, with a lot of pauses, without proper intonation. In other words – lack of fluency is observed. When they are asked to read aloud in the class the increase of the stress-level make them to make even more mistakes.

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**How could the teacher help?**

- Pay special attention to automatization of the sight words reading. If necessary spend more time on this exercise until you are sure the child is able quickly recognise all small words.

**What parents to be advised to do at home?**

- Keep reading to the child, even if he already has some reading skills. Ask the child to read some of the words in the text, you are sure he knows.
For a child who has difficulties, choose/prepare a text that matches child’s reading level – you should be sure that the child is able to read at least 90% of the words in the text independently.

Don’t ask the child to read faster before he/she can read accurately. Accurate reading helps comprehension, speed will come with time.

Choose a book that is interesting for the child, and matches his reading level.

Read together (in turns) with the child. Help with the words the child find difficult.

In order to keep the motivation, use audio books. With the time you may ask the child to listen to a chapter, and then to read the next one.

Suggested exercises and games:

✓ The “Essentials” of developing reading fluency
  https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OM-mi_4usvE#t=143.5665402124431

✓ A Mom’s suggestion for fluent reading
  https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rQDdN29tDHY

✓ Worksheet 1 – Rhyming Skills
✓ Worksheet 2 – Syllabification Skills

✓ In order to help children with fluency, you can record a text they are supposed to read and let them listen to it before the reading. When recording the text, read slowly enough, so children can follow you; respect the punctuation. Your reading should be an example of how children should read. After that have the children read the same text, trying to imitate the record.

✓ Use drama techniques to provoke children to read “as actors” – start with teaching them how to use intonation to express different feelings and/or attitude (e.g. ask them to say “Hello! How are you?” to a close friend they are happy to meet, and to somebody they don’t like very much but need to be polite); then go on with some short simple dialogues, increasing the length and the difficulty of the reading material.
The child has difficulties with punctuation

D. is 9, in the 3rd grade. She has no difficulties with decoding, reads the words correctly and with good speed. But her reading sounds like “robotic” – no intonation, no expressions. For the listeners it is impossible to understand the meaning, because D. does not respect the punctuation. Her own level of comprehension is not good and very often she can’t reproduce the content of the text she has just read.

How could the teacher help?

- Pay special attention to the meaning of the punctuation marks. Explain to the child why it is important to respect the punctuation while reading.
- Make a demonstration of the importance of the punctuation marks: at first read a text without respecting the punctuation; then read it again with proper expression. Check the level of comprehension in both cases.
- Dedicate some time during the classes to train with students so called expressive reading, where the pauses and intonation is very important (reading in roles could be

What parents to be advised to do at home?

- While driving the child to school, you can direct his attention to the road signs and make a parallel with the punctuation marks.
- Read to the child and be careful about the punctuation. Try to read with expression – it will increase child’s interest and will serve as a model for him.
- When you ask the child to read aloud require he/she not only to decode the words correctly, but also to “read” correctly the punctuation – it will increase his/her level of comprehension.
Suggested exercises and games:

☑ Short lessons about punctuation and reading
   https://learnzillion.com/resources/72239-using-punctuation-to-read-fluently-1

☑ Read Punctuation Exercise – follow the steps:
   - Have the child to model the punctuation marks with clay and to write down their names;

- Divide the punctuation marks in two groups: stop signs (full stop; question mark, exclamation mark, colon, dots) and pause signs (comma, semi-colon, dash…) and explain the difference

- Provide a text with many different punctuation marks and ask the child to read only the marks (go over the words, and naming only the punctuation marks) – follow the child carefully and every time he miss a mark, or make a mistake, stop him, point to the mark he missed or named wrong and ask him to start from this place again.

- Provide another text, and this time ask the child to read again only the punctuation marks, but instead of their names to say the words “stop” and “pause” respectively. Follow the child carefully and every time he miss a mark, or make a mistake, stop him, point to the mark he missed or named wrong and ask him to start from this place again.

- Provide another text and ask the child this time to read the text “normally” – reading the words, respecting all the punctuation marks. In order to help the child you may suggest at the beginning each time he comes across a punctuation mark to pronounce in his mind “stop” or “pause” depending on the mark he sees.

- You will be impressed how different the reading sounds, and as a result the level of comprehension also increases.
4.2. In case of Problems with Reading Comprehension

a) The child has difficulties to understand the text because there are too many words whose meaning the child doesn’t know.

K.T. is a primary school teacher. Some of her second grade students, although having good reading technique, have difficulties to understand and remember what they read. Trying to find a way to help her students to improve their reading comprehension, the teacher uses different strategies.

**How could the teacher help?**

- Prepare flash cards for the unfamiliar or difficult words in the text children are about to read.

- Use some time during the lessons to teach pupils how to find a unfamiliar word in a dictionary; discuss its meaning in the context of the sentence.

- Separate what the child is reading into story grammar components: setting, main character, action, and outcome.

- Take a trip to the library or to the book store; let the children to look through some books, ask them to pay attention to illustrations, to find names of the characters; and back in the class discuss what they think the stories about, what could happen to the characters, etc.

**What parents to be advised to do at home?**

- Listen to your child read aloud for a few minutes every day. The book he/she is reading aloud should be at a level slightly below his/her classroom instruction in order to foster reading fluency.

- “Walk” through the story page by page and look at pictures, illustrations, headers, sidebars, etc. This helps the child prepare for the information he/she is about to read as well as improve comprehension and concentration.

- Reread favourite books. Rereading familiar books provides good practice for fluency and decoding; it will also increase his/her level of comprehension.
b) Other difficulties – In some cases difficulties with reading comprehension may be caused by problems with reading technique (see 4.1.) or by problems with the memory.

CONCLUSIONS

The school period is associated with active formation/development of skills and accumulation of knowledge, which makes the school a key institution in the child’s life. Well before children go to school there are certain markers that could serve parents and teachers as a guide to understand if the child has developed the necessary prerequisites for a successful school start. However, very often parents believe that the child will outgrow the problem and will catch up with the peers. Unfortunately, teachers do not help, reassuring parents that all
children develop at different rates and that there is time, and everything will be fine. In most cases the real difficulties occurred and are reported by teachers (parents usually need more time to accept that their child has a problem) in the primary grades, during the process of literacy acquisition.

One should not expect that the child will outgrow the difficulties with reading (reading technique and comprehension). It is therefore very important to recognise the problem as early as possible and to address it immediately. Early identification would allow teachers and parents to implement appropriate effective strategies to support the child in his efforts to deal with reading difficulties (and difficulties with writing, because the two processes are closely connected). Neglecting the problem will not only make the child struggle at school, but very soon will lead to a lack of motivation to read, to reluctance or refusal to read (and do any school work that involves reading and/or writing). All these negative feelings and attitudes are piling up, worsening over time and negatively affects self-confidence and self-esteem of the child, making him feeling uncomfortable at school, and quite often leads to underachievement, social isolation, and early school-leaving.

Therefore, in this module we tried to describe the prerequisites for good reading skills and what kind of difficulties underdevelopment of any of these skills lead to; and to offer some practical advices on how teachers and parents could support the children to overcome the difficulties.

REFERENCES


INTRODUCTION

Reading comprehension skill acquired during school years affects student’s all learning in positive or negative side lifelong. While their effect reflects well on subjects of the persons whose reading comprehension abilities improved, it reflects badly on subjects of the persons whose reading comprehension abilities unimproved. Bloom(1995: 60) put down to the fact that there is a relationship between students’ power of understanding the reading text and success of maths, sciences, language and literature subjects.

Reading is based on the ability of word recognition and reading comprehension. Word recognition ability improved readers, vocalize the words quickly and give the large part of their energy to understanding. Such readers’ readings are fluent and they understand most of the reading text. However, the ability of word recognition unimproved or little improved readers don’t spare time to reading so much, because of being busy with vocalising the words. As for that such readers have trouble with reading, they read slowly and misread, they can’t understand most of the text. The era we live in necessitates the bringing up functional literates. Functional Literates; they are the individuals who read swiftly and understand the text, in the same time using this ability for making their life better. Unfortunately, it is anticipated that specially in Primary Schools at 1st grade, many students have difficulty of understanding the reading text.

It is possible to see many students who say that they can’t understand anything from the text they read. Also some of the students get their parents to answer reading comprehension can get difficulty of understanding the questions asked in their own language test by the teacher and answer wrongly.

Given this situation the teacher must enlighten the student about the strategy and techniques which improve students’ reading comprehension ability.
1. READING COMPREHENSION

Reading Comprehension is the ability of solving the ideas given in the text and assigning a different meaning to these by using prior knowledge. Reader by vocalizing solves the written code and with this gives the meaning to the word that he/she has vocalized. Smith and Dechant (1961: 74) had emphasized two points while defining reading. These are recognizing and perception. Recognition; letters’, words’ recognizing and it is an emotional activity. Comprehending the material in the brain follows recognizing activity. During the comprehending this material both is organised, made sense of and linked with the old knowledge (Aka, Dökmen, 1994: 13). Knowing the meaning of the word is not enough on reading comprehension. It is necessary to understand, comprehend, envisaging, correlating and evaluating beside knowing the meaning of the word (Güneş, 2000: 59). When reader reads a text, she/he integrates his/her prior knowledge with the idea that passes in the text. With the words’ meanings passing in the text they get to sentences’ meanings, from sentences to paragraphs’ meanings and from the paragraphs they reach to the meaning of the subject. Reading comprehension, is a kind of texts with his/her prior knowledge, and by synthesising getting to a new view (Akyel, 2005: 2). For increasing the prior knowledge, the child must be brought up in a substantial stimulant surrounding. The children who are brought up in a surrounding like that, have much prior knowledge as against their peers. After reading the material, readers must bridge between the knowledge they have and presented knowledge. Reading comprehension is related with thinking. Readers’ past knowledge, interests and reading habits are very effective on understanding the material. Each individual knows correlating the new knowledge with old knowledge. Reading Comprehension is based on what he/she understands from the text, readers’ experience on the text and knowing the structure of grammar. Reading comprehension is a kind of improvement on language and view. The relationship between reading and thinking have been focused on for a long time. Stauffer (1975), had defined reading as solving some similar problems. Like in similar problem solving the reader uses the concepts, improves, changes them and test the hypothesis. Reading comprehension is a kind of method of searching. On teaching reading exploring techniques are used. According to this view, the key of teaching is determining students’ reading purposes and the questions they have. After doing this, students read the text and solve the trouble. By means of this, the students are encouraged and they can predict the incidents can happen in the future. Readers must be influenced by the texts they
read. In addition to this, they must correlate their knowledge with the knowledge in the text (Lerner, 2000: 405-407).

To Smith and Dechant (1961: 74), the ability of reading comprehension consists of these items:

1. With graphic symbols, that is with writing and between these meanings relating.
2. Idioms’, sentences’, paragraphs’ and complete text’s meaning it has understanding hierarchically, beside this, the ability of relating among the parts and complement.
3. The ability of evaluating the text you read, and understanding the aim and sense of author.
4. Being able to relate the views of the text with the past livings. Reading Comprehension; seen, audible and readings’ comprehending a text mean commenting on it.
5. Comprehending the main idea by understanding the writer’s words and ideas he/she puts forward.
6. Concepting the author’s ideas that he doesn’t tell directly and determining the content.
7. Being able to measure the text from the view of accuracy, validity and value.
8. Being able to practice you have understood and heard on your behaviours and what you did. For realizing reading comprehension, your vocabulary must be enough and pay your attention on the text. According to researches, for explaining the meaning not only eyes, at the same time remembering and care mechanisms, using of the language and nature, understanding of the speech, relationships among individuals, socio-cultural differences must be considered. Naturally eyes have a role on reading activity. In writings, most of the knowledge must reach into the brain. Yet only reading with eyes is not enough.

For example; if you don’t know English, a text in English is given to you, only you will read with your eyes but you won’t understand anything. Because of being meaningless the words, nothing will stay in your memory (Kayalar,
To Miller (1972:7) reading comprehension is up to a few factors which consist of the effects of knowing the word. However, each child must understand each sentence’s real meaning correctly. In reading activity; sometimes a word is not used with its real meaning. Reading Comprehension is always based on sentence’s meaning’s commenting in the text. For having a good comprehending, in a text among paragraphs, in a paragraph among sentences the realtionship must be understand accurately.

To Robinson and Good (1987:145-146) reading comprehension seperates to 3 categories. These are: Simple Understanding, Interpretative Understanding and Questioning Understanding.

1. **Simple Understanding (Comprehending)**: It involves the abilities like finding the place of the knowledge,gathering the knowledge, following the steps, determning the characters, and places, following the instructions, explaining the writer’s structural plan.

2. **Commentary/Interpretative Understanding**: It involves these abilities; finding the main idea, choosing the important ideas,organising the ideas, improving concepts and principles, summarizing testing outputs and effects.

3. **Questioning Understanding**: In this kind of understanding acquşred abilities are below:

   - The readings; quality, value, accuracy, reality, bias, consistency, propaganda, relevance, sufficiency comparing from the view of reality and opininon.
   - Considering the author’s aims and attitudes
   - Considering the subject from the view of atmosphere
   - Evaluating the language of the surrounding
   - Evaluating the general pattern of the atmosphere
   - Considering the proficiency of the wirtier
   - Evaluating the knowledge sources.
2. WAYS OF IMPROVING THE READING COMPREHENSION

So as to improve reader’s comprehending the text he/she read, before reading, the sequence of reading and after the reading using some strategies facilitates comprehending the text. The student can use one or a few of the strategies of care before starting to read the text. Attention, expresses focusing of the conscious into a definite point (Yılmaz, 2006: 2).

Before the reading:

Before beginning to read the reader’s using of the attention strategies, organises his/her prior knowledge related to the text, so it provides to be understood more easily.

Attention strategies being able to use of the readers’; expectation generating and diagram generating.

a) Generating Expectation Strategy: The student must determine his/her reading aim before beginning to read. The student’s attention concentrate on the text, by way of knowing what benefit he/she gets from the text and for what reason he reads. The student's being aware of the aims of the units that he/she will learn causes having expectation of acquiring which attitudes after reading the text (Öztürk, 1999:5). The student who has an expectation like that has determined his/her goal about reading. Leading expectation strategy can be used comfortably at 1st grades of the primary schools.

b) Generating Diagram: The student's commenting the pictures, table, graphic and diagrams related with the text before beginning reading. This strategy helps student's transferring his/her prior knowledge into the reading atmosphere. It can be used at 1st level. If the text is related with the subject that he/she knows, it means that he/she has an idea about reading what. That is ambiguity gets less from the beginning. The more familiar the reading text, the easier it get understand. The reader after analysing the knowledge he/she understands while reading in his/her brain, he/she can predict what is going to happen in the next line. For example; When reading a text about leadership. If he/she sees the word of 'authoritarian', at once the image of authoterritoritarian leader comprises in his/her mind. The more opinion the reader has about the text, the more efficient his/her reading will be can be said (Blaha and Bennett, 1993; 40). Researches express that conveying the prior knowledge into the reading atmosphere contributes to comprehend. The student can use other
strategies to help reading before reading activity. These are; it is a kind of reading strategy like self confidence and with motivation as if he/she was teaching someone.

c) The strategy of self-confidence and internal motivation: Self-confident readers, even hard texts they can read. Likewise the reader's being motivated internally, causes him/her being willing to reading, the disposed reader understands better what he/she reads.

d) Reading Strategy As If Teaching Somebody; Another way of the improving comprehending is reading as if teaching somebody. (Sekmen, 1998: 181). Especially taking someone as a model and imitating at 1st grade is very possible. While reading the student's thinking of the roles of the teacher's contributes to understand the text better.

During The Reading:

a) Underlining Strategy: The student's underlining the words or sentences he/she thinks that so important while reading. It provides the text to be revised fast. This strategy is suitable for the 2nd grade of the primary education. Because it is possible for the students to differentiate the important and unimportant knowledge with the help of this strategy.

b) The Strategy Of Taking Note Beside The Text: It is the student's making explanations and putting symbols beside the text during the reading activity. It makes student's repeat the text quickly. And this strategy is suitable for the 2nd grade students of the primary school. As it is probable for the students to distinguish the important and unimportant knowledge in this strategy.

c) The Strategy Of Following Up The Ideas Instead Of Words: The reader's following up the ideas not the words facilitates the reading during the reading activity (Sekmen, 1998: 181) The reader must pay his/her regard not to the meaning of the words, the meaning of the sentences.

After the reading:

a) Repeating the reading text strategy: Learning knowledge's repeating increases the keeping in the memory. After reading the text the student's repeating the text with his or her own words provides keeping in the memory of the reading text. The more repeated by the reader, the increaser the possibility of keeping in mind.
b) **Making Sense Strategy**: It is constructing the new knowledge he/she learns from the text onto the old knowledge by making sense. In this strategy it is possible that the reader's putting forward the main idea, expressing the tellings in the text with his or her words, using items which facilitate remembering and summarising. (Selçuk, 2000:197). The knowledge learned in this way is constructed.

As a result on the 1st grade it is anticipated that there are lots of students having problem about comprehending. Our century obliges the literate of functional. Because of this individuals who will be brought up must be rigged with the abilities which involve the literate of functional. The individuals having these abilities can understand what they read fast. The teachers especially in lessons must do applications oriented to improve comprehending of their students. Therefore the teachers must have knowledge about the strategies which improves comprehending. In the class teachers with reading studies must teach before reading, during the reading and after reading how to use which strategies. Furthermore, they must advise to use these strategies to their students while reading a book alone.

### 3. IMPROVING READING COMPREHENSION SKILLS

Our century has obliged to bring up functional literates. Functional literates; They are the individuals reading and comprehending swiftly, at the same time using these for making their life better. Yet the teachers being not enough from the view of method and techniques and because of the lacks putting into practice some troubles have been lived. This study on improving comprehending abilities involve recommendations oriented to both students and teachers. Humankind has been trying to understand, explain and comment entity, life, incidents occurring around the universe he has been living since his existence. This effort is being the basic starting point of scientific researches, is a kind of being reading and understanding activity with all speed is going on day by day. Reading activity is an efficient duration increasing human's knowledge capacity, shaping his ideas and beliefs, acquiring personality. This duration is an ideational activity in which individual's biological, psychological, physiological features study in an effective harmony. In the core of this activity there is a goal of 'understanding'.

There are great numbers of different definitions had been done relevant duration of reading, but basically based upon understanding. Reading; can be defined as a duration which have beginning, improvement steps and result. Turkish in the curriculum is qualified as a complicated duration which consists of eye, voice and brain's different functions like reading duration, vision, perception, vocalising, understanding, configuration in mind.

The process of this duration is explained like this; it is connected with perceiving line, letter and symbols. After perceiving being concentrated care, words and sentences are understood, being interested in and necessary knowledge are presented. Selected knowledge are passed over cognitive processing like sequencing, classifying, questioning, relating, critisizing, analysing, synthesising, problem solving and evaluating. Processed knowledge is combined with prior knowledge and by benefiting from visuals presented in the text once again have been made sense of them. On making sense student's attention, motivation, reading aim, grammar and reading experiences are very effective.

The reader above all must know the word for realizing the reading activity. the reader can know the word by using his/her mental dictionary. Because of knowing the words wrongly or insufficiently the text is misunderstood or not understood in a chaining way sentences, paragraphs and as a whole. While reading the words and sentences made sense always set to memory and by using the prior knowledge the reader through his/her interests tries to obtain the meaning of the entire. By directing obtained meaning into the long term memory, reading comprehension realizes. In this part recommendations are presented for dyslexic students' troubles they lived and about what we can do against the lacks. Reading abilities are seems to have different independent sequences and be different skills each of them but in fact all of them are interdependent. For Instance: the problems lived in the coding makes hard to obtain contextual clues necessary to code the next word in the text. Therefore, the teachers giving education to dyslexic children have to find supporting activities which provide to realize successfully reading request required from him/her. Thus, with the moduls we formed contributed to dyslexic children for dealing with this hardship by improving step by step.
STEP 1. FLUENT READING

It allows the students to develop the ability of reading comprehension. But students who have reading difficulties generally have difficulties in this subject.

To decrease the speed of reading first you should ask a student to read the text in his own speed. Then ask him to read the text again and ask him to underline all the key words. Then ask him just to read the words he underlined. Do this for few times. Student can try to note the key words to another place. Then ask him to read another text without underlining the key words. As soon as finishing the reading open a discussion about what he read and finish the activity by summarising the important subjects that the text tells.

To read the text or the page this activity can be changed to a game by giving them less time than they need. Even you can give 45 seconds which can be meaningless. By this way the students only have to be focused on the key words. As students who have reading difficulties generally do not have problems with less important words like 'for', 'and', 'with', this activity will be especially helpful for them. However they do not add importance in meaning but they spend much time while saying. Trying to read all the words correctly including short words like prepositions, conjunctions, it can sometimes break the speed of reading and make the understanding of the text more difficult. You can make it a fun game so that this activity can reduce the feelings of anxiety may occur in converting students to a challenging for everyone in the class. By this way students will not feel that he is different from others.

You can do another activity by giving sentences written on a piece of papers. You should carefully choose the sentences that students can read easily because the aim is to read fluently. Ex; if the subject is about football, the sentence will be “The referee blew his whistle”. After looking at the sentence written on the paper turn the paper down and they say what is written on the paper. This activity not only help the fluency but also help the students have difficulty with learning to understand the importance of reading as if he is speaking. It is also a useful activity as well in terms of being able to help overcome any obstacles encountered and the feeling of anxiety about reading.

STEP 2. EXPANDING THE VOCABULARY

Encourage the dyslexic students to read high level books than their levels.
By this way they can have wider and richer vocabulary set and these books will help to develop their understanding skills. Reading activities can be done with other students and adults in a group study by using the audio books.

Give the new words that they will read in the text before. Ask the students to look up in a dictionary for the new words’ dictionary meaning and ask them to use the new words in a sentence. Students should be given the opportunity to discuss new words involved in every sentence. This can be the first step with the group reading. In this study; student and adult (teacher, parent or another student) read sequentially. If a student has difficulty in reading a word then adult should read it. Because the main aim is not to read the target words, but it is to increase the experience of using the language. Audio books are really helpful in this context. It is possible to find so many books recorded in CDs. However, you can also make a compilation of the book from which you can create your own. It is important for this kind of source to be disseminated and shared by all school. This activity can be changed into a new activity which the school librarian joined too.

**STEP 3. PAIR READING**

Students’ reading with the teacher at the same time and a loud is called paired reading. This is a technique to be configured as a private.

Student chooses a book. Then both the teacher and student read all the words together loudly. Meanwhile, the teacher create an accurate reading sample sets by pronouncing the words correctly and pace his reading speed according to student’s speed. Student must read every word, whenever the student say the word incorrect the adult corrects the word by pronouncing the word correctly. Then student corrects and say the word again and they continue reading together. It is forbidden to say “NO” and to make reminders about the vocal and others. Teacher never tries to correct the student. Rule; teacher waits for a few seconds and gives the student chance to find his fault and to correct it.

Topics to be considered at paired reading:

- The student chooses the reading text.
- Teacher and student read at the same time.
- Reading is carried out in a harmonized way,
- Distractions are minimized.
- To encourage praise is done.
- At the end of the reading the stories and pictures are discussed.

There are two main steps: reading together and reading alone.

Reading together – While the teacher (or the parent) reading all the words together with the student, he has to pace the reading speed to read in harmony. Teacher will not let the student to stop in one word and if the student cannot read the word teacher will wait for a short time then say the word correctly. This activity ends with the discussion so the student can understand the text and to enjoy the reading.

Reading alone – Then we pass through to this activity which gives self-confidence to student while reading aloud. While student reading aloud the teacher can continue reading quieter voice or he can stay silent. To increase the student’ self-confidence we should slowly pass to this activity. When the student has difficulty in one word teacher says the word immediately and continue reading with the student. This activity continues till the student reads without help.

The most important part of paired reading and all kinds of reading is encouragement. Do not forget to show your satisfaction if the student is successful by using this technique.

It will be a good work to observe student’s own development by writing a paired reading diary shown in the below table.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Title of the book</th>
<th>The things that I liked about the book!</th>
<th>Do I like to suggest this book to my friends? Yes/ No</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Fig1:** Reading Diary
STEP 4. WORD GROUPING

Ability to group the words is an important part of being able to read words fluently. It is the thing we do while reading naturally during the effective reading. Putting the words together makes the reading to come to our ears as a normal speaking. Children who have difficulty in reading have difficulties in forming meaningful sentences by putting the words in the text. They need to do activities to read by grouping instead of reading the words one by one. Teacher gives examples how to do it and to show how it should come to ear.

The activities to be done to read the words by grouping:

- Give a title then ask to students to brainstorm to say sentences / put them in order.
- Ask the students to complete the sentences with the appropriate statement.

I finished my homework ……………………(when). Student can complete the sentence by writing “before I started playing game” or “after dinner”.

- Softly underline the words that should be grouped by pencil.

Yesterday morning we went for a walk to the seaside.

- Write the words on pieces of paper and ask the students to put the word together to form sentences.

Fig. 2: Preparing Streamer
• Ask the students to separate the sentence in words. This time you can give pieces of paper which all the sentence is written on and ask the students to cut the sentences into words or ask them to write the words on their notebooks or ask them to separate the words by drawing a line between the words.

The teacher said to the students in his class that it is time to go to library.

The teacher / said / to the students in his class / that it is time to go to library.

• Separate the paragraph to its sentences. (Apply the above activity to all paragraph.)

One sunny Sunday
Little girl
Asked
Her mother
If she can take her dog for a walk or not.
Mother
Did not want
Her daughter to go alone.
She asked
Her brother
To go with her.
Her brother
Did not like the situation
Because he wanted to play computer.
STEP 5. ENHANISING THE USE OF WORDS

The best way to consolidate the new words is using them in different places. Most of the adjectives can be used for Geography, Science and Foreign Language Subjects. It could be a good way for the students to give the adjectives with the newly learned words and to highlight them at different subjects. This study can also be used while teaching grammar such as adjectives, nouns and adverbs. This study is therefore an important study because it helps students to transfer the words into different areas use the same word in different ways. Try to create a list of words that you can consolidate with different activities.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>The Adjectives To Be Taught</th>
<th>The Consolidation Activity</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Bright</td>
<td>To describe the colours of Liquids</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>To talk about the weather (Geography)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Slight</td>
<td>To describe the Weight (Science)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Talk about the Weather Forecast, for example Light Rain (Geography)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Important</td>
<td>Can be used in all Subjects</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>The Nouns To Be Taught</th>
<th>The Consolidation Activity</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>War</td>
<td>Explaining War (History)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Code</td>
<td>To explain the abbreviation somehow (science) or to explain the words used in social subjects by using the codes</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Fig. 3: Word List
STEP 6. PLANNING OF THE READING

For the teaching of reading comprehension students who have different levels of understanding is required to be considered and planning should be designed carefully.

The trainer should read the extract before he/she prepares the usable curriculum for the students.

Here are some suggestions for preparing the reading comprehension plan below:

- **Give the new words previously.**

  The text must be determined in case some words can be difficult to read and understood by the students. These words may be difficult to understand or acceptable for the pronunciation. Before the students start to read the text, give them the cards on which the words written readable. Add a picture next to the word to be particularly useful for small children. Show the words to the students, pronounce them and explain them what they mean. This is not a play that students try to predict the word; it is a teaching step.

  ![MOUSE]

- **Sorting and Grouping The Phrase:** Select the phrases that you think students can find difficult to understand. They might be the words or phrases that are difficult to pronounce or understood. Ask the students to read the phrase, then before discussing what it all means, discuss the meaning of individual words so that he will not stop reading when he sees these words.

- Before the lessons prepare the questions in all levels. As it is easy to ask questions in a basic level, you can ask questions by mind at class but before the lesson you should prepare the questions carefully that you want your students to criticize about.

  **For a better understanding of the text consider the following areas:**

  **For The Fictional Text Reading:**
• Title
• Fiction-Time- Place
• Preliminary information for the readers to understand the context
• Characters and Their Names
• Main Events
• The Order of Events
• Decision And The Results

The Text Based On A Real Events:
• Title, General Overview, Summary and The Result
• Pictures and Figures
• Preliminary Information
• Terminology and Words

STEP 7. CHECKING THE LEVEL OF COMPREHENSION

No matter how many times they repeat the exercises, we shouldn’t expect the students to remember them. It’s better to write the questions on cards. If they cannot answer the questions, they should find the alternative ways. Such as:

• Go back and Read Again
• Look at up the dictionary to find out the meanings of the words
• Make clear the concept
• Ask questions

Prepare cards including some clues on them so that students can easily remember when they look at them. It is necessary to add some pictures thereby they can remember the words without looking at the words again.
STEP 8. COLLABORATIVE READING

Encourage students to check what they understand and want them to summarise it. This technique will be useful for them while they are reading the chosen text.

First the teacher starts; the process of reading aloud and thinking aloud is a model for students in what to do process. For the first time, long text cannot be used; short texts should be chosen first. If you need to discuss about the text at the beginning, do it!

- Read loudly and allow students to follow you
- Summarise what you have read
- Underline the important points and try to reaffirm that you have read by using different phrases and sentences so that students can understand the main idea
- Clarify the points that cannot be understood such as unknown words, new or difficult concepts or the difficult parts of the text. Methods for providing understandings are: reading again, look up the dictionary, discuss about the concept that are difficult to understand.
- Ask questions about the text you are reading. This section can be turned into the discussion that you find solutions for some questions and give extra info
- Try to guess what’s going to happen on the next step. This will activate the imagination and will provide an opportunity to enable them to look critically that was mentioned by the authors.
- There would be a reason for students to continue reading because the text could estimate and confirms their thoughts or will be against them.

Then it comes to the students’ turn and they do the same thing. Finally, without the support of the teacher in this process, he would have learned what they should do. To make real the full learning, the teacher should be a model to the students and allow them to practice many times.
STEP 9. CREATING MIND-MAPS AND DIAGRAMS

Allow students to prepare the subject map so that they can answer the questions of reading passages while re-reading. This map must be prepared in their own way because it will reflect to their own perception on the information they read. In this way, they can remember the information better and they can find this map more meaningful when they re-read. The map will also be the visual material that can show what they read. There are many ways to create map depending on the applied work and reading passage. For a start, a pre-made map which has headings and subheadings can be used and as a last stage, you can keep on doing it until the time the student can prepare on his/her own. The topic map can be put into a plan that includes the events in a narrative sequence to keep better track or it can reflect the important parts of the book in details.

STEP 10. PREPARING STATEMENTS AND TIMETABLES

Tables and other visual supporters can help outline to be seen with the whole issue. They can be used from a butterfly’s life cycle up to the date of the order of the events in order to show all kind of information. The important point is that the table should be visually engaging and should create a method to be easily followed by the students have difficulty with reading to understand better. Asking the students to prepare their own statements or visual materials is a good idea but they require a general text to be repeated again before they prepare the table showing important events. If the tables are given prepared, be sure that the writing on it is clear and understandable and written in a bold font for each arrow or line. In History lesson; you can use the charts and timelines to put the dates and the events in order. For example: You can also prepare timetable that shows the chronological order of the period of one of the emperors, changing laws of your country, development of the harbours or cities or a week from 9 years old child in his life that lived in the 19th century. You can use different colours on the timetable to show the different periods or different events happened at different times. For example; if you prepare the timetable for the period of the Queens or Kings’ empery, you can show the dates in red, the birth with blue and the date of their marriages with green colour.
Timetable also provides the students to prepare the answersheet to understand the symbols and the abbreviations on the page better. Abbreviations and symbols may be difficult to understand for these students so that they will have the opportunity to find useful applications when they create their own answersheet.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Symbol or Graphic</th>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Event</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

Fig. 4: Timetable

**STEP 11. USING BODY LANGUAGE**

Gestures and expressions are important because they show feelings and emotions. It helps the students for better understanding of the reading part. At the end of a good homework and a practice done in the class, a good examples might look like; The students create a list of emotions that can be experienced every day such as; happiness, anxiousness, anger, frustration, worrying and etc. Then students are expected to watch one of the programs that are prepared for children. They put a mark on the list whenever they see the facial expressions and statements while they are watching. Then draw an appropriate sentence on each statement or body movements. The student shows the motion to his friends in the class and they try to find out about which part of that program is. This exercise shows that 'understanding' is far beyond the reading and also shows non-verbal communication is a phenomenon related to body language. As an alternative to this exercise, students are asked to show the kind of feeling and their body movements on the papers using the strips which shows their movements. Then the strips are placed in the box. Each student select one of these strips and tries to revive the movement or expression. Meanwhile, other students also try to find what the movement is and which part of the program they are asked. This is a good interactive classroom activities. Then, in another exercise, students can try to portray the movements.
STEP 12. AUDIO RECORDING

Audio recording is a great activity for students because they can follow the text at hand while listening. They also can learn new words and they can do a good language studies with this activity. Select some tracks that students can read fluently and easily and then record the audio while they are reading (The process of obtaining recording must be done in stages). When he listens to his own/her voice, he will understand that he can read easily and it will give him a confidence. Then go to the texts that the students have some difficulty reading. For a start, while recording read together as you did in the paired reading. As you continue this practice, allow the user to record his in time. At this stage, It is important to discuss about the text with the students because discussion activity provides students to read better. Remember to keep the records so that you get to see the student's development and use them to show their development.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Audio Recording Checklist</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Process</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. Text is selected according to the student's level</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. It is recorded</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Recording is played</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. More difficult texts are read and recorded</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. He/she does recording himself/herself</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Reading Comprehension</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
STEP 13. ADAPTING TO THE TEXT

It is important for the student to adapt herself/himself to the information described in the text or the story. This reading text may be selected from a a novel or a textbook. The best way to do this is that to allow the students to grip everything as much as they can while reading. Before reading the text, ask students what they get from the title. This way you can get an idea of how much the students to have prior knowledge on the subject. Here are some questions that could be asked after reading the short chapter from a novel: Did you like the story? Why you liked it or why you didn’t like? Who is the main character and how did you understand that they are the main characters? Then ask the students about what will happen at the end of the story and what might be? Even it is a novel, a story or the text included scientific explanations, students should be taken into consideration that there may be at different levels of understanding. It is important to consider the level shown below, because they understand beyond the basic level, and it requires students in deep thinking and also the skills to be able to adapt more to the text.

**Basic Level:** Ask questions based on the knowledge. such as “Who, how and why was born?”

**Gripping Level:** Deducing or “read the lines” Ask questions such as: What will happen on the next stage? Why do you think he told that?

**Creative Level:** It allows to think deeply and be authentic. These kind of questions improves the level of the students’ understanding: “Write the different end for the story or describe how the story ends”.

**Critical Level:** It leads to think deeply. To improve this level such questions can be asked: “Did you like the book?”, “Why?”,”Was there any difficult parts to understand?”, “Was the subject fastmoving?”,” Why didn’t you find it fastmoving?”
All these levels, especially Critical Level, can also be applied for the texts that include explanations. It is important to lead the dyslectic students to read because while reading, it makes them understand the aim is not only reading properly and fluently but also to grip the text.

**STEP 14. ENVISIONING**

Although many children have difficulty with reading can revive in the mind, they find it difficult to write about what they read. If you create visual materials related to the main idea of each section, while they are telling the stories, they can use these pictures as clues. It could be the best way to show them the chronological order of the events.

After reading a section, let the students close their eyes and visualise the part of the play. Ask them what they see and discuss about it so that they cannot be distracted. Then ask them to portray the thing in their mind. Attach it on the card and write number of the part at the right side of the card. Having lack of ability of drawing is not an issue; you can also describe it with the lines. If you have enough time, colour the pictures. If it is a long section, students can divide it into three parts into three separate pictures like the beginning of the section, the middle of it and the last section. In this way, to remember the sequence of events becomes easier. When he finishes the book, the students have a visual chronological record in his hand and when he is requested to tell the story again, he can use these visuals to remember. Reviving the main characters and drawing them could be a good idea. Students can try to show the main features of the author's narrative such as; a long and pointed nose, short or long hair. These features are shown with an exaggerated drawing. In this exercise there isn’t any practice like taking notes or writing; the student expresses his drawings on the next step.

**STEP 15. ORDERING THE EVENTS**

It is important to take notes about the chronological order of the events for the students have difficulty with learning who have the difficulty ordering the events. This practice should be short and only highlight the major events. Some students can take notes on some chapters and prefer to attach them with the visuals and write them on the reminder.
STEP 16. EXPANDING THE SENTENCES

Expanding the sentence for the students have difficulty with learning is important in terms of developing impressive writing skills. This study can be applied by taking words from the texts that students read and using these words in sentence writing. Select a group of words from a book that the students know and create some phrases using these words. Then ask the students to use that word groups in the sentence. Identify new words that can be associated with this phrase and ask them to create a sentence using the new words. For the next step these phrases can be brought together to create a more detailed and longer sentences. Ask the students to draw some of from the phrase and help them to give a special meaning to the sentence. Thus helping them to write detailed and long sentences, you also help them with development of creative writing skills. This study provides an excellent opportunity to teach different types of phrases. To teach the prepositional phrases; you need to teach prepositions, nouns and adjectives first. For example, you can make the following statement: Prepositions answer 'where' and 'when' questions. You can add an adjective before the noun and etc. Ask student to draw a tree in the middle of the page. Then ask them to write short phrases in response to the question of where in the tree. For example:

- Under the tree
- Behind the tree
- On the tree
- In front of the tree
- Beside the tree

Now you can write the sort of phrases in response to the question of when:

- After lunch
- Before the dinner

Ask them to expand the prepositional phrases by adding the phrase and make them more interesting.
STEP 17. RE-READING

Students must read a lot and regularly in order to read more easily and fluently. A way to read fluently is re-read the books they read before. To practise this, it is important to follow the plan and make a sort method. Ask them to choose some books that they love and can read comfortably. After that, allow them to choose one of the books and tell you verbally what the book is about. It is important to find new information and new details that they hadn’t noticed before. Everytime they read the book, they should find the new details about the book. This activity can be done using a table showing the major characters / events. On each reading, they can talk about the new features with the characters and events. By giving them a limited time to finish reading in less time you can create opportunities for them to be able to read more fluently.

STEP 18. SELECTION OF READING TECHNIQUES

These students often have difficulty in accurate reading, but it is possible for them to improve the level of understanding. They read in order to make sense of more than read accurately. While they are doing voice reading they can make mistakes nevertheless they can detect the text at good level. In order to understand the text better, you need to make them use the reading strategies and find out the key words in the text. However, when reading for different purposes, you must also teach strategies they can use. Try to inform the students about the different reading techniques and show them when and how to use. Here are some given exercises:

**Superficial Reading**: Reading only main topic, introduction and the conclusion parts. You can use this technique to understand if you want to read the rest of the piece or not.

**Reading with Scanning**: Search for a particular keyword or phrase. Imagine the word or phrase before you start scanning and then skim through around the page put your eyes down. While scanning, try to focus in the middle of each line.

**Reading for Fun**: You might want to do visualization, you can read in order to let it all hang out. You must be comfortable while doing this kind of reading.
**Further Reading**: Reading each word carefully and also read the words and phrases again and again to understand better. Here you should focus on accuracy.

When students learn these techniques, give some examples for the types of data related to reading and ask them to choose appropriate techniques and place them under the correct heading. In order to add visual exercises you can use a symbol for each reading techniques.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Technique</th>
<th>Mission</th>
<th>Comment</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Superficial Reading</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Reading with scanning</td>
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<tr>
<td>Reading For Fun</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Further Reading</td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Fig 6: Reading Techniques Table

Give them different tasks and ask them to find and insert the appropriate box using the necessary techniques.

**Missions**:

- Find the history of a particular period in history lessons
- Take notes before writing an essay
- Decide which is the main part in a book
- Reading novels
- Reading an article from the newspaper
- Reading magazine
- Read a Maths Problem
It is useful to ask the students to comment on the questions. For example, they can write the parts they thought was a lot more challenging and the things they must concentrate on more.

STEP 19. CHECKING THE READABILITY OF THE TEXT

The difficulty level of the text must be checked to make sure whether it is appropriate for the students have difficulty with reading. Readability of the text means that it is easy to read and understandable. There are methods used to assess the readability level and some publishers indicate the reading level behind the book. However, this figure can sometimes be confusing and some publishers can indicate the book's readability level too high or too low. The reason is that they usually use different criterias when assessing the readability level.

For instance; some assesses according to the words used and the length of the book; and some assesses according to the details of the book and some style and the others to the wording and the subject. You can also use some applications in order to determine the readability of text for students.

To evaluate the readability level, consider these items given below:

1. **Font Size:** You may want to choose a larger font used books. This will help them focus more on the shape and structure of the letters, words and phrases.

2. **The number of letters in a sentence:** If the student's reading level is low, you should choose texts including shorter sentences.

3. **Number of syllables in words:** One- or two-syllable words read are suitable for beginners, by reading level increases compound and additional words are started to be used more.

4. **Punctuation:** Check the compliance of punctuation and grammar as well as author's style.

5. **Story:** This part is very important because if the issue is very complicated, student may have difficulty at the beginning of reading.
6. Mistakes: When they start reading the one chapter, count the mistakes they have done. If he/she makes five errors before the end of the first page, it is probably because the level of the book is too high for him/her.

STEP 20. DISCUSSING THE TEXT

Many students have difficulty with reading are interested in literature, but they usually find the level of words heavy that are used in some novels. It would be a good idea to give the words before starting to read in order to understand and interpret the novels. This work includes the placement of words in the appropriate space in short texts. By this way, students will have been shown new concepts and ideas that the students can encounter while reading. There are many ways of teaching new words but the important thing for these students is the use of methods that will appeal to many senses and record the words that could be repeated by the student when he/she wants to re-read again. This can be done by creating a personal dictionary or by the word cards stored in a box. Words must be given clear and in understandable manner. This is a teaching step, is not a game that we ask the students to have a prediction. The students can look at the dictionary or can appeal to other reference book to find the meaning of words. Then discuss with the students for the meaning of the word. If possible, use shape description and ask the students to take their own notes about the meaning of the word. It is also useful These can be written on small cards and by looking at the meaning of the word he can discuss with his friends and study with the recorded cards. It may also be asked to draw a picture depicting the word on the dictionary he created himself. This is because it is a more personal way will help the students to remember the meaning of the word.

This practise may take a long time, but to be able to read fluently this method can be extremely advantageous and beneficial for students to better understand. While reading the novel, they will not have to stop and look at up the dictionary when they face these words. The goal here is not detract from the fluent reading and reading comprehension skills because of the words they can not pronounce.
CONCLUSIONS

In the review of literature it was determined that student who used reading strategies while reading demonstrated strong reading comprehension skills. Also, students with strong reading comprehension skills often performed better on comprehension tests, getting high comprehension scores. The strategies students practice and develop in their early years will become lifelong skills to draw upon whenever they encounter a challenging text. When they stop to check their understanding, highlight key phrases, or take summary notes, they are doing what good readers and learners do. And as a result they will be able to work with increasingly difficult texts and content.

REFERENCES


INTRODUCTION

"The book has an important place in the child's life and development, because it plays both an educational, recreational and cultural role. The young player likes to contemplate the pictures and admire the characters, thus the book becomes a source of pleasure. But reading has a much deeper action. It is an inexhaustible source of wealth, enhances the development of imagination, sharpens the critical sense and allows the child to have contact with human thought. Through the book, the child learns the language, increases the overall culture, opens to the world and life."

(Olivier, 1976, p. 64).

Reading begins long before children know how to read, so books should be present early on your child and family context. We form readers since crib, as the development of literary skills and literácitas can and should begin long before the child's entry into formal education. The whole context, whether the child’s family or education, shall provide you with opportunities that allow him to contact with the literary work. These pleasant experiences with literature must be carefully planned in order to develop a positive attitude in children and let them feel pleasure in books and literacy. The child’s literacy habits development arises, fundamentally, with time and the family predisposition to this educational moment. Children become talk readers as a result of parents reading habits since crib.

Indeed, the child starts its journey in literacy long before knowing how to read or write formally. Being a reader requires a set of skills related to written language as well as mental domain processes, attitudes and expectations. However, even before knowing the decoding techniques, the child should develop emerging behaviors through the interaction with those who are closest to them. Behaviors during early childhood before the oral and printed are of utmost importance, making clear that literate environments facilitate ease of
learning to read and without motivation the student brings home the readers of training task will be much harder. By showing—students what they can get through reading is perhaps the most important step to be taken by the mediator of reading, whether parents, teachers or teacher-librarian because by reading, students and readers in general can learn to explore possibilities and consider options, valuing difference, establish relationships, define who they are and what they can become. Showing students the reading values must be an imperative of our society. Children and youth learners should feel the literature as an essential part of their cultural heritage as a means of personal and social achievement, autonomy, communication and creativity. It is then up to school, and teachers, parents and society in general to set an example and to convey the message that there are many good reasons to become readers.

1. SOCIOCULTURAL ENVIRONMENT IN THE FAMILY (parents culture of readers, reading traditions in the family, parents as role models, and others)

"The family environment influences the child in many ways. If parents read a lot, to have books, it is very possible that the children begin to gain interest in reading " (Oliver, 1976, p.64).

Rooting of reading habits is a lengthy process and it should soon begin in early childhood, long before the formal learning of reading. The family plays in this context a decisive role, being mediators parents of greater importance in creating reading habits and the most expressive and significant affective models, whose behavior children imitate. If the competence reader not timely develops more it can hardly be acquired.

1.1. The Impact of the Family on the Formation of Reading habits

The family serves as a model, play a crucial role in the development of literacy to convey their expectations and attitudes towards reading and writing and contributing, often unconsciously, to develop skills necessary for learning to read, such as the language skills and metalinguistic. Alvarez (2000), cited by Balça (2008) says that "without the help of parents, there is little chance to
develop in children a positive attitude towards reading." To Gomes (1996), a reader is formed from the cradle, and the book should be seen as a playful object, which is part of the child's world as a toy or a game. It is for the adult to read with your child and show you the potential that the book may have. Similarly, Magellan and Appeals (1988) show the emotional environment that is created between the adult and child around the text, and the adult mediator, the interpreter, the intermediary who makes that contact time with the text a moment affective communication and intimate sharing. The family should promote and facilitate the child's contact with the book and other printed materials, awakening her desire and curiosity. More than that, it should be thought of as a basic model of conduct, because their example is decisive for the child to move in the books, feel curious and want to find out why the presence of newspapers, magazines and books in the family every day. If children think the parents as regular readers, certainly they will internalize the idea that reading is a daily ritual and feel will be motivated to do so naturally.

As the first child socialization agent, family influence it in various aspects of your life, so if at home parents have the habit of reading many good books, this behavior constitutes a reinforcement to the child begins to reveal a great interest in reading. If, in fact, the family home be a place of great receptivity to children's literature, certainly that children start early to understand the words that identify the books and, consequently, to develop a good vocabulary. In this sense, it applies the premise that children learn with family when it gives you a stimulating and motivating environment. In the specific case of reading, if the children are placed in an environment where the presence of books is part of life every day, they will internalize their value, simultaneously awakening interest in learning to read.

In turn, reading a book to a child constitutes an activity which is of affective meanings compared to a toy or game. It is at home, and the people you are closest to, that the child alia quintessential communication. The child speaks and hears things about the book, the more tender and sweet voice of all who are their parents. It is to share the literature with more children than to teach, hence the importance of the mediating role of the adult and the appreciation of the reader / listener response. In this sense, we share the opinion of Veloso and Scratched (2002), report that when "... As if it is not born player, it is essential to conduct various mediators that lifelong and repaired and consequent actions..."
will generate the reader and will grow, given that the aesthetic, emotional and intellectual aspects are inseparable. "(p. 28)

In modern and Westernized societies, children tend to start the development of written language before formal education (Cimaz, 1978), experiencing social practices of reading even before learning to read, (Azevedo, 2006). Indeed, daily life offers several such as on the street, in the garden for children and the community, and always with adult collaboration. Jolibert (1991), in relation to early contact of children with printed material, states that "on the street, at home and at school, they spend a lot of time to formulate hypotheses of meaning of what is written on the posters in the windows of warehouses, on supermarket shelves in the packaging of food products, in newspapers, comic books, the works of children's literature, etc."(p. 49). In fact, currently, children grow up in environments saturated with written messages and, as a result of immersion in this literate environment, learning takes place in an intuitive way, making an important start for the development of reading comprehension. Are the chances that they will elaborating on written language with which they are confronted, they will interact in the teaching of reading. In this regard, Marques (1995) states that "children with better performance in reading and writing are those that have had many experiences with writing during the first years of life" (p. 43). It is therefore important to involve "early family in the promotion and development of literacy process" (Moreira, 2009, p. 68) since this allows promote language and literacy in the family.

In this context, Marques (1991) argues that "children who best read in primary school are those who have come to listen to stories read from babies and have a family atmosphere where reading and writing are daily activities." The same author, Marques (2000) points out that young people "to whom the parents or relatives more read during childhood, those who most liked to read when they were children or more books have at home, are also those most read and more like currently read."(p. 115)

It is therefore within the family that the child starts the process by which learns and internalizes the social and cultural elements of their environment, being the space where they settle their first interpersonal relationships. There are several factors leading to the development of positive attitudes towards reading, by the child, in particular, handle books or magazines, see adults reading to themselves or to children or to exchange views on what they read, or are they themselves involved in any other activities related to reading. The whole
motivation process works as pre preparation for formal learning. It follows the success or failure in learning to read. So you can assume that the success or failure in reading varies by socio-cultural environment, as the quantity and quality of social interactions and habits are different.

Thus, children who grow up in highly literate contexts reveal more likely to create reading habits than children whose family environment reveals a low level of literacy and where reading and writing are not meaningful activities. Similarly, children from families and communities where contact with the code written is reduced are the most affected by school failure (Smith, 1990). However, these children are trained to learn, your biggest problem is not being driven by the family for certain learning. Here, another problem arises, related to the difficulty experienced by parents not learned to give the necessary support to their children. However, teachers can make children enjoy family support, to embark on work that parents can convey orally to children, such as: collecting proverbs, traditional stories, legends or rhymes of popular literature. We can then say that the interest of the parents for the literacy of children is reflected in learning to read and that the experiences, feelings, appreciation of the social value of reading, in short, an intensely lived relationship with the book determines the motivation or lack of interest in reading. In support of these facts, Barbosa (1992) states that "the family habit determines the social value that the child grant writing" (p. 62).

1.2. Family Environment and Literacy Development

The family motivation and background becomes a key factor in the learning process of reading and writing (Fountain, 1990), since children in different stages of their development, initiate performing the procedures of adults. In other words, the child learns or not, as the family does not use printed material in their daily lives. However, we must point out that this will help to create unequal opportunities for children literate means and children non literate means. In fact, in their family environment these children were motivated to other learning, equally significant, but which are not, somehow, valued by the school. It is then necessary to inform and support parents on how to perform a proper follow-up to the child who begins to take the first steps in reading and simultaneously sensitize them to the need to share responsibilities with the school in the readers formation promoting equal opportunities should be the
educational system responsibility. It should work by compensating the shortcomings of the child’s background or strengthen the initiatives undertaken by the family.

Indeed, the literacy skill is the result of a learning and development process that begins before the formal teaching and learning process of reading and writing. This emergent literacy process of experiences and learning that the child performs around the printed and books, observation of situations, integration of sensory and motor experiences is the way to learning verbal language, both oral and written. To Menyuk (1995), cited by Villas-Boas (2002, p. 81) the problems that are in school failure genesis, "(...) can be attributed to several causes, including the fact that the child has not heard read stories or not having handled books.” According to Wells, (1985), only the activity of reading or listening to storytelling is significantly related to the use of reading. In fact, it is consensual recognition of the importance of an environment where the book is part of the daily habits to emerge a taste for reading. Thus we infer that the development of literacy is considered important for the school and social performance and that "(...) the role of parents or other adults with strong emotional bond to the child in its development, seems to be relevant" (Villages - Good, 2001, p. 82). In fact, the activity of reading, tell stories and talk about these stories can be carried out by different actors, such as the child and the teacher, or the child and the parent or any other family, as it were exposure situations, explanation or interaction for problem solving.

As we have been examining, early contact with the children's book and literature, as well as the stimuli it receives from adults, allows an increase in the child development process. If we consider that the first year of life is crucial for the child's development, especially neurological and affective level and up to 4 years, much of the cognitive structures are consolidated, we must agree that the stimuli received by the adults are the key to their harmonious development. The school must raise awareness among families on the need to acquire reading skills as they will result in the educational and personal success of their children. Therefore, we reiterate that the book should be in the family for the child to learn to dialogue, to understand, to think, to imagine and to live. Throughout the book there is dialogue between parents and children. In this regard, Viana and Teixeira (2002, p. 24) consider to be the desire to learn to read, and the positive activity that the child holds on books and stories, the two essential requirements
for formal learning of reading. If the adults surrounding the child write and read, this will awaken the child's interest in reading and writing.

In this context, the number of books that the student has at home, as well as the accessibility of libraries in school, showed a positive influence on performance in literacy (Yes-Yes & Ramalho, 1993). In one of the studies developed on reading habits of the Portuguese adult population (Freitas, Casanova & Alves, 1997), found that virtually all of the respondents who benefited from having parents or family members to read them in childhood were standing readers in adulthood. By contrast, only about 30% of which were socialized without reading readers are in adulthood. Another study (Santos, M.; Neves, J.; Lima, M. & Carvalho, M., 2007) reveals that the younger respondents are, the higher the percentage of those who say they have been encouraged to read, mostly by from family members, but also by teachers. It is also verified that a key factor in the reading initiation activity is observed that his parents to read. The latter is far more significant in respondents with a consolidated family educational capital. In this regard, and in the opinion of Sobrino et al. (2000, p. 88), "it is necessary to promote the taste and the commitment of the construction of the child's personal library, so that it knows where to find the book you fancy reading, keeping it in order and giving it an important place in your room (...)". The same author adds that children tend to copy the models they see, so parents play a key role in times of reading that provide to their children. It is therefore important that the child to witness the act of reading at home, the importance which the model to emulate. Imitation is always present. The same with semantic acquisitions (generalizations: "ball designates all that is round"). There are children who do not learn to speak, but understand oral language immersion context.

Thus, children who grow up in highly literate contexts reveal more likely to create reading habits than children whose family background reveals a low level of literacy and where reading and writing are not meaningful activities. Similarly, children from families and communities where contact with the code written is reduced are the most affected by school failure (Smith, 1990). However, these children are trained to learn, your biggest problem is not being driven by the family for certain learning. Here, another problem arises, related to the difficulty experienced by parents not learned to give the necessary support to their children. However, teachers can make children enjoy family support, to embark on work that parents can convey orally to children, such as: collecting
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these stories can be carried out by different actors, such as the child and the teacher, or the child and the parent or any other family, as it were exposure situations, explanation or interaction for problem solving.

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The same author adds that children tend to copy the models they see, so parents play a key role in times of reading that provide to their children. It is therefore important that the child to witness the act of reading at home, the importance which the model to emulate. Imitation is always present, however, at an early stage, the child cannot imitate but by its own grammar, not by imitation of the adult, but how to justify the "errors" of grammatical rules (e.g., bending of irregular verbs "fazi" to "I" or "goed" to "go"). The same with semantic acquisitions (generalizations: "ball designates all that is round"). There are children who do not learn to speak, but understand oral language immersion context.

Also in this context, Shapiro (1987) states that the emotional climate that is established in the relationship is of great importance to the development of literacy in three areas: (a) the model itself, the child tries to imitate and whose structure underlying strives also to acquire through active formulation of hypotheses; (b) direct instruction on the pronunciation of words, names of things, the use of language in certain social situations that feeds the functionality notion of written or spoken language; (c) the practice of scaffolding where the child gradually assume greater participation in its performance to the requirement of new performances (roles) by the adult.

In this sense, parents to buy a book, should not take the action as an expense but as an investment in what are most precious, their children. At home the book is always welcome, and reading is interesting, regardless of socio-economic background of the parents. Furthermore, it is important that parents accompany and attend, along with the children, the places where the books, namely, bookstores and libraries. So the family is the privileged place for the child to awaken interest in reading.

In the family context, to consider not only the physical space as well as human relations that contribute to the introduction of children into the habit and significance of print. The family is the first child identification model is it that confronts with materials, creates her expectations, gives support and encourages. Following these reflections, is to recall the study Chall, Jacobs & Baldwin (1990), where the authors highlight some of the aspects of the family environment that seem more relevant to the learning of reading, of which can point out the following: (a) The relationship between the reading of parents / children (for example, reading stories, which directly influence the language of children and, indirectly, their learning to read; (b) Continuation of the attitudes
and behaviors of parents readers; (c) linguistic experiences within families, which can contribute to the development and enrichment of the child's oral language.

It is therefore a combination of factors and motivations related to the family environment, the explanation lies in the development of interest in reading. Emerging reading behaviors based also on motivational factors (expectation that reading satisfy the needs); operating factors (decontextualized use of language); linguistic factors (code written knowledge in the functioning of the language); and spelling factors (conventions on the printed images, letters, numbers, punctuation, spacing...). It is therefore essential to return the students self-confidence and motivation and repay them the pleasure of reading. The own self-image of the student, as a reader, influences the quantity and quality of reading. We will then have to try to understand not only the cognitive aspects of reading learning process but also the motivational aspect. It is appropriate that the school and teachers know the cognitive stage of development of the child, their likes reading and the library, through a qualified teacher librarian, make available a diverse and appealing set in the area of children's literature that responds to demands of the students.

2. THE ROLE OF THE PARENTS IN THE FORMATION OF CHILDREN'S READING CULTURE (psychological and pedagogical aspect)

From birth, even throughout maternity, it is advisable that the future reader lives closely with words. Regardless of whether they can understand what they hear, they are part of a world of onomatopoeia sounds, exclamations and whispers that unites them to their mother and that has to do with expression. Little by little, babies will discover that words are not only manifestations of existence, but that they also allow us to understand what is missing.

Several scholars who have devoted themselves to the teaching of literature, share the opinion that the best time to start reading aloud to a baby is on the day of its birth, as the child’s brain begins to develop from that moment onwards. Children, with whom no one speaks, sings to, or reads to aloud from a very young age, will have more difficulties at school. Indeed, teachers and especially those dedicated to literacy defend the importance and convenience of reading to very young children aloud. Very often, the choice of books and topics that are
read to children are linked to affection (likes and dislikes) rather than to effectiveness. This happens to create the habit of reading from a very early age whilst taking into account taking the favorable conditions to ignite the desire of reading.

2.1. Importance of the First Contact with Books

Shortly after birth, ties, that may be called ‘effective warmth’ intensify; talking to the child is the first sign of supporting communication. Then comes books and other toys. The books that children relate with and choose to read will influence them for life. It is natural that children will bite or even ruin books, but there is no need to restrict their contact with them as it is through the act of groping that the first intellectual notions are assimilated. So when parents begin to introduce books to toddlers by showing them their pictures, by reading to them, counting, etc, this will be highly valued by children, since it will be associated with maternal affection.

Spending time with family (leisure time) is also important. Families should read out loud to children and share situations and experiences with them. If the father and / or mother are reading a book, a newspaper or a magazine, it appears that the child, firstly by simple imitation, is also encouraged to "read" a book. Considering it is a family time moment, the child will be stimulated and encouraged to read, thus being a great benefit for the future.

We very often witness a child pretending to read a book, making the left movement / reading right and recreating some of the stories that an adult has already read. This is a pedagogically structuring exercise, that is important for the future role of reading and which can be systematized, until the child starts school.

In this regard, Villas-Boas (2002) refers to Leitchter, who considers that there are three contexts (climate) that helps the emergence of literacy and therefore facilitates its emergence:

(A) The physical climate which has to do with the existential background of books or other print, facilitates the involvement of children with the written language. In fact, whatever the economic and social situation of the family, writing appears in numerous household materials (food packaging,
plastic bags, medicines, clothing, games, etc.) These are the first daily experience with literacy provided by the family;

(B) **The interpersonal climate** includes every kind of interaction that the child carries out with parents, siblings or other people in the household. Clearly these experiences are not of an instructive nature, but they permeate an average literacy chain. Activities such as selection of television programs, paying bills and other functions that entail writing, such as writing letters, taking notes writing a shopping list, organizing family albums, involve reading;

(C) **The emotional climate**, which undoubtedly is present in the emotional climate and in motivating families, occurs during conversations and events where reading and writing takes place.

In this context, it is necessary to correlate this with the theory of the knowledge construction of Vygotsky (1988), according to whom the informal learning, which begins at birth, is a process of internalization of social relations, that is, the appropriation of sign systems that operate within social activity, in relation to each other. According to Vygotsky, the intellectual development of the individual cannot be understood as independent of the social environment in which the person is involved. Every superior psychological mental function is internalized in social relations, therefore being part of a culture and a product of social life. Permeated by this historical conception of culture, Vygotsky analyzes the cultural development of human conduct in the light of what postulates the "general genetic law of cultural development," which unfolds in the great importance attached to the internalization of signs. The author, by proposing this law, according to which "... every function comes into play twice, on two levels, first in social and then the psychological, the principle among men as interpsychical category and then within the child as intrapsychic category "(Vygotsky, 1995, p.150) unveiled new horizons to the study of the social genesis of that development. In fact, the role of family environment and the type of experience that it gives children by encouraging literacy development is of paramount importance.

2.2. **The Process of Literacy Development**

The development process is ongoing, and when the child arrives at school he/she has already some knowledge– which should be taken into consideration -
resulting from successive social interactions with the written word. According to Sim-Sim (2002), "... the reader path got its start before formal education, covering natural ways" (p. 6) leading to the emergence of reading and writing, from which stimulation occurs and consequently the development of oral language and early contact with written materials.

In this regard, Teale and Sulzby (1987) point out five clarifying premises of the matter:

1) The development of literacy begins before formal instruction;

2) Listening, speaking, reading and writing are developed concurrently and are interrelated;

3) Literácita competence is developed in daily life, to respond to day-to-day needs. Children learn about reading and writing as they learn about the world around them;

4) Children develop a critical cognitive work in developing this competence, from birth to six years of age, precisely through real life activities in order to interact with the real world/realality;

5) Socially interacting with adults in reading situations and writing. It is here that children learn the written language.

We cannot speak about teaching reading without making reference to the pedagogy of affection and without understanding the importance of enjoying reading from the early stages of life. Reading to children is the first requirement for parents and educators to develop emotionally intelligent and imaginatively interventional readers. In this regard, Veloso and Scratched (2002) understand that "(...) read is the first condition to form children readers, emotionally intelligent and imaginatively interventional" (p. 26).

In the case of reading aloud, we see that it promotes the establishment of affective bonds, which entertain and encourage the desire of reading, favoring the child's school process. In this perspective, sociologists are unanimous in referring to the family as the primary socializing agent that plays a decisive role in the acquisition of notions, habits and content in social reality. We may also add that this development is inseparable from socialization. They are parents who select and display books to children, offering them a varied repertoire, according to their preferences and interests. Through their encouragement and
example, adults provide children with experiences according to their interests and development stages, motivating them to adjust their reading as their intellectual and environmental needs change and thus lead the way with greater security concerning the formation of the habit of reading. In this manner, it is intended that children will fall in love, from very early on, with the literary world with the help of adults who are part of their educational universe. In the case of young children, these are completely receptive to new knowledge. It is their families’ responsibility to be aware of their role and to be able to try and convey to children a real love of literature and not a passable simulacrum of affection by text and the word (Veloso & Scratched, 2002). In this case, the book-toy, which is more fun for the child, also intends to move the child towards the illustration. The very colorful pictures capture their attention as do the different formats and layouts.

When reading images, we should never underestimate a child's ability and need to explore a book, to touch it, to look and observe in order to better explore and get to know it. It is important for a child from their first months of life, to be given the experience and valued the importance of reading by creating with him/her emotional ties with this new educational object. The fact of being a baby is no reason to keep books away from the daily routine. Quite the contrary: it is from the mother's or father’s lap that the baby can and must approach this magical universe, awakening the pleasure of hearing the sound of words.

3. TECHNIQUES TO BE USED IN THE FAMILY FOR DEVELOPMENT OF READING SKILLS AND INTEREST IN READING (organized reading, family library, etc.)

In order to promote their children's interest in reading, we can propose a set of actions. A child can identify the objects or toys they have around them and/or toys using labels with the words written in big sized capital letters and do the same with the names of the people living in the house. Thus, it is possible that the child begins to relate the names of things and people to the global graphic representation of the word. We can ask the child where the name of each thing or person is written, making her/him point with his finger at the respective word.

You may want to begin by labeling one thing or person at a time, increasing gradually the number of items to be labelled. You may also gradually
ask the child to put the label on the right object or person, following the example. In that case, if it is the adult to put the labels first, the labels should be removed in front of the child and the process repeated several times. You should avoid saying the name of the letters that compose the words in the labels because:

1. The letter means nothing to the child;

2. The name of the letter is one thing and its value is another. Only when the child has identified the words globally can we focus on its value, leaving the name of the letter to the moment when the child has already mastered reading without hesitation;

3. Acknowledging a letter in a word is to big an analytical effort for a child who may not yet be ready for it. Later, we can make the game more difficult by showing only the label and asking the child to pronounce the word it refers to.

In this context, Díaz-Plaja, quoted by Marina and Valgoma (2006) proposes the following lines of action:

1) Create a reading environment at home. Observing parents handling books and magazines becomes an important reference behavior. Imitation encourages the appropriation of certain behavior habits.

2) Talk about books. Growing interest in the plot of a story extends the reader’s activity which generates a very important transmission of knowledge and communication to enhance a taste for reading.

3) Make a proper reading to the children. Finding out about the existence of the vast supply of children's books and sharing these books with them will provide the discovery of a rich and varied literature that provides moments of conversation and exchange with children. Reading should be a fun exciting and reassuring activity.

4) Select the themes that are more motivating for children. There will certainly be something to meet their preferences in the existing books collection.

5) Convert television into an ally and not an enemy. Never be tempted to say you should listen to the story first and then watch TV, because you would be converting reading into punishment and television into prize.
6) Know the municipal library. Children's libraries offer more books than those they can have at home. Taking children to the library offers greater interaction with reading animation activities and meeting with other readers.

7) Include a stop at a bookshop when you go shopping, even if you’re not going to buy anything. It is always good to see the latest publications about an author or a topic of interest. If you can, let the child accompany you and buy a book.

8) Respect your child’s own rhythm. Sometimes the same story can be re-read several times and this is a practice that allows you to consolidate the reading habit.

9) Parents should not worry if their child has a different taste of reading, as it is important to encourage the child reading taste not their parents’.

10) Do not fall into frustration if these strategies seem not to work. You are fostering the development of a habit and in this matter time as an ally. Never lose heart, as you are walking your own path to develop this habit in an effective and affective way.

11) Read aloud. Lullabies are replaced by parents reading stories aloud to their child before going to sleep and these moments create intense interaction ties with them. The stories are experienced together with living characters that are a perfect reference to a common culture. All adults can have fun with their child either by reading stories or by role-playing episodes of the day as if telling a story. We believe that it is within this duality that a child’s desire for reading can be awaken.

Regarding the set of techniques and strategies that can be used to develop reading skills, we begin by listing a set of essential practices to promote it:

- Investigate the reading habits practiced at school, getting information about what and how much children read as well as the source from which they get the books;

- Promote joint meetings between the different levels of education on this subject;

- Dialogue with parents about the importance of developing reading habits in their children;
• Establish a committee for the library, that includes student representatives, to work with the teacher librarian, ensuring a good collection of books, with a functional, comfortable and attractive layout and that the library will be open before and after classes and during breaks;

• Plan, according to the standard curricula, a diverse set of contents;

• Publicize lists of useful and accessible fiction and information books to support the school work in different subjects;

• Install a bookselling shop in a safe and attractive place with resources that take into account the needs and tastes of its users that should be open at least three days a week and run by a teacher with the support of students;

• Organize visits to libraries and bookstores;

• Hold a book fair with shows, activities and meetings with writers;

• Place a "Bookbox" in each classroom, efficiently managed with books available that should regularly be increased and changed, so that students have access to books in quantity and quality to allow them a reasonable choice;

• Allocate a time period in the students’ timetable and a proper space for independent reading so as to give an opportunity to read at school. This may include promotional activities, introduction, discussion, teacher support to students with learning difficulties, etc... (Benton & Fox, 1988).

• Another important strategy is the formation of communities of readers, projects with students, teachers, parents and the community which comprise an exchange of points of view between young people and adults about the works, fix challenges and reading activities and, above all, contribute to the creation of a positive atmosphere that transforms the act of reading into an activity for life.

• Diversify text types and teach different ways of interacting with them. Studies show that students who read a greater variety of texts show better results. It is not enough to ask students to read. The teacher should be seen by the student as the model of reader, one who takes pleasure in reading and sharing what he/she reads them. On the one hand, teacher has the responsibility to know the whole process of reading comprehension. On the other, he/she has the primary role in creating a taste for books and reading and showing the way forward into Reading autonomously.
If primary school children treasure reading and feel joy when in contact with books, as they advance in school years they tend to engage in other activities away from reading. Television, video games and social internet networks are undoubtedly more pleasurable occupations for children at this stage. In fact, if school does not do more at this stage to foster a love of reading and books, much can hardly keep those who were already readers and win new. Reading even one proposed by the programs, to be presented as something that provides excitement and that leads to the discovery of fantastic worlds. We should not hide that their learning requires effort, but we should be able to select different strategies to attract and hold the attention and interest of the child by giving freedom of choice from various texts that can motivate them to read about different themes. Only through free and spontaneous reading can we make new readers and foster a love for reading in general, recreation and study.

4. THE ROLE OF THE FAMILY – SCHOOL COLLABORATION IN THE FORMATION OF STUDENTS’ READING HABITS

It is believed the taste for reading and writing, as well as the acquisition of habits that promote these processes, by children, begin early in life, within the family, which should be reinforced when the child enters kindergarten and throughout their schooling. This partnership between the school and family is therefore very important in the process.

The involvement of parents in their child’s school life contributes to improving their educational success. So, any country's education policies should encourage the existence of a relationship and cohesive partnership between family and school, since family supports the child during the whole process of reading and writing which will have a positive learning impact at school.

Therefore, a daily and conscious participation of parents in their child’s school is essential: either through direct interaction with and at school or monitoring homework, helping with tasks, looking for solutions and interacting all the time. Thus, we believe it is crucial to strengthen ties between school and family, explaining parents that their collaboration and presence is indispensable in the educational process of their child. However, school must be aware of the difficulties some parents face in monitoring their child’s school life, due to lack of formal knowledge and information about how they can help their with homework for example.
In this context, school has to adopt an appropriate position to attract the attention and foster the participation of parents. Thus, in addition to the traditional celebrations that schools annually promote, parents can, for example, collaborate with the school librarian, organizing leisure activities, events or participating in some classes, for instance. So, schools must be attentive to the availability and skills of families, providing them with proper training for specific functions that may play in this process.

In fact, this collaboration is a major challenge for those involved in the educational process of children and youth. It is necessary that the school and the family try to establish a compromising partnership in order to overcome the difficulties in this relationship.

**CONCLUSIONS**

For all this, it is important to develop reading skills. Motivation is, in some way, a guarantee for the acquisition of these skills. It is therefore essential to encourage children, from a very early stage, to come into contact with written language. It is up to the family, society and school to create the conditions for children to become aware and learn that reading and writing are indispensable tools for learning. In this regard, the present study is part of an attempt to interpret how family, society and school contribute to the acquisition of reading habits among children and adolescents. We had the opportunity to note that, regardless of their socio-economic backgrounds, most children were encouraged by their family to read and enjoyed favorable conditions for the cultivation of reading habits. Having an appreciable quantity of books, buying and offering books to their child, represents a current practice in households where reading is an ordinary practice.

Taking into account the results obtained from the application of the questionnaire to students and their respective parents, we found out that, in fact, there is a concern among parents regarding their child’s reading habits and they also reveal some concern with this activity. So, most students claim, in first place, that family is the one who encourages reading, followed by school. Most students have visited a library; most students have a small library in their home; and, in case of difficulty in reading, students ask for help to family and class teachers. Likewise, most parents encourage their children to buy books; most parents think that reading is important for their child as it is a prerequisite to be
successful in life. When students have difficulty in reading they receive more family support and then the class teacher.

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MODULE 6
ENCOURAGING READING OUT OF SCHOOL AND
DEVELOPMENT OF CHILDREN’S CREATIVE THINKING

1. IMPORTANCE OF READING SKILLS

Reading has to be a pleasure opening to unknown windows on the world and helping us to keep our dreaming attitudes. Reading takes us closer to the meaning of life. Books can be also very inspirational in particular occurrences in our life. People read to spend their spare time relaxing, to learn, to be informed. Wondering around the pages of a novel, they acquire the tools to better understand oneself and the world outside. It is evident how reading is a privilege belonging to human beings, no other living creature, as far as we know, has got this privilege. A good book gives us the chance to enter the author’s feelings and to feel them as our own to use imagination like he or she does: this is the power of reading. Reading lovers use every spare time to do it. For this reason, it is so important that children acquire this power otherwise it will get lost. Unfortunately, reading is neither common nor pleasant any more. All over the world, there is a severe crisis in the reading skill itself. Yet it is a necessary basic skill. Both students and adults know it very well even if they are often interested in different things. The massive use of medias such as TV before and the NET nowadays has been detached people from reading, both books and newspapers. The daily use of new devices such as smartphones and tablets have been fostering a culture of a passive watching instead that an active reading through what happens around us.

Nonetheless, the presence of these new modern devices does not have to discourage reading but it is relevant to support the act of reading or to instil it also through the use of digital modern tools too. In addition, web contents that are shown in a reduced and fragmentary way are based on reading skill and reading comprehension.

Nevertheless, it is relevant also how most of people, both young and adults, need reading skills anyway. Theories about the general loss of attention among students all over the world consider the complexity of social and cultural changes in the last decades. However, they do not consider properly the persistence of this basic skill as one of the fundamental and necessary tools.
towards knowledge and learning. In March 2000, the EU Council met in Lisbon to discuss about social and cultural growth’s aims in all Europe. They established a specific aim for the next decade. By 2010 the EU had to “become the economy based on the most competitive and dynamic knowledge in the world, able to do a sustainable economic growth offering new and better jobs and a bigger social cohesion” (1). To get such aim, they focused on ten different intervention areas. Among those one of significance was “Education and training to live and work in the know how society” (2). The future society is imagined as the know how society in which, once more, basic skills are necessary, especially reading and reading comprehension. Before the ten years passed, the EU Parliament and Council reinforced the idea by issuing an official Note on 18th December 2006 in which they defined the eight key skills for Long Life Learning. In this Note you read that in a know how society it is impossible to think of a limited time of learning but we should think of a long life learning. The eight skills are the following:

1. Communication in the mother tongue;
2. Communication in foreign languages;
3. Maths skills and basic skills in Science and Technology;
4. Digital skills;
5. Learning to learn;
6. Social and civil skills;
7. Spirit of enterprise;
8. Cultural awareness and expression.

As you can notice, the first four of them are directly connected to the reading skill and comprehension. The other four are the result of a personal elaboration of what you have learnt in the first four. In fact you cannot get the aim of “cultural awareness” if you do not get that competence in the mother tongue or in a foreign language. The same is for digital or maths competence if you cannot understand a written text.
2. DATA ON READING SKILLS

The most famous inquiry about student’s skills is called OCSE-PISA. It is a project promoted by the Organization for Cooperation and Economic Development; they want to know about Maths, Science, Reading and cooperative Problem Solving skills among students. Though its focus is on scientific literacy, it has useful and detailed instructions to understand reading skill among students from every Country. In particular, in the official report of 2012, we read: “PISA Inquiry 2012 tested 15-years old students on reading comprehension, Maths and Science. This allows a great international comparison with other countries, from both OCSE area and the rest of the world. Moreover it allows a comparison with data from the last four inquiries (2000, 2003, 2006 and 2009)”(6). Italian data are not reassuring especially about reading: “Among OCSE countries only Chile, Greece, Iceland and Mexico are lower than Italy”(7). Of course, in our case there are other important differences, for example between male and female or North and South. At the same time there are also unexpected similarities according to reading habits: “Italy seems to be very similar to Denmark, Czech Republic, Luxemburg and Israel”(8), countries with much more intensive and significant reading habits.
As stated in the Eurydice network document on Reading literacy (2011), “the EU average score in reading for 15 year-olds and the proportion of struggling readers in this age group remained stable in PISA surveys carried out between 2000 and 2009. The spread of the results in reading (the gap between the highest and lowest scores) slightly decreased indicating a growth in equity of educational outcomes.

In 2009, approximately one in five 15-year olds in the EU-27 countries had difficulties using reading for learning. In only Belgium (Flemish Community), Denmark, Estonia, Poland, Finland and Norway was the number of low achievers 15 % or less (the European target for 2020). The proportion of struggling readers was especially high in Bulgaria and Romania (ca. 40 %).

The most important student-related factors, which affect reading achievement, are gender and family background. Girls on average outperform boys in reading, and the gender gap increases with age. However, international survey results suggest that engagement in reading has the potential to balance the reading achievement differences between boys and girls or students from various social backgrounds”.

Fortunately, Italian performance is improving positively and especially between 2006 and 2009, we have registered better results, still attested in the 2012 inquiry. For this improvement it has certainly helped a lot the introduction in Italian Schools of a National Test, called INVALSI, made by a Public Research Institution that is continuing the previous action of the European Centre for Education (CEDE) in the first years of 1970s. This Research Institution, among its duties, does also:

- Regular and periodic tests about knowledge and skills among students;
- A National Test about Italian and Maths general levels for the students at the end of the Lower Secondary School;
- Learning and skill tests for the students at the end of the Higher Secondary School.

Of course all this, done to take Italy at a satisfying level, is not enough yet. There is a lot to do and in this prospective, Schools and other associations, able to interact with young people of any age in an effective and personalized way, are of great importance and play a central role.
2.1 ISTAT Data (Italian National Institute of Statistics)

Before giving official data, it is important to explain the quality and quantity criteria that define a “reader”.

Both National and International standards to define a reader are:

- Middle reader = 1 book per year
- Strong reader = 12 books per year
- Very strong reader = more than 12 books per year

Of course it is clear that we do not refer to schoolbooks nor professional training ones. This way we focus on the idea of reading as free time activity. Reading for studying or for professional training is not considered in the official statistics because even if this kind of reading certify about reading skill and improves data about Education in each Country it is someway compulsory.

On the other side reading for fun represents a free personal choice and a concrete alternative to television and digital images of any kind. Moreover, reading for fun contributes to individual psychophysical health and social health, improving also personal creativity. In particular, in Italy, this is something very positive that has its effects also on studying and professional aims. This way the
global competence of readers improves and gives them more incentives that help them to reach otherwise difficult or impossible other aims..

Now the official data from the Italian Institute for Statistics. As to the middle reader profile, we have had a soft but dangerously constant reduction in reading habits since 2011 until today: among Italians from 6 years old and up only 42% read a book in a year. This is a critical situation.

Moreover if we distinguish for genre, the percentage of the female readers rises to 48,6% while the male one reduces to 35%. This information confirms the improvement of school success for women in the XXIst century and the reduction for men. Such situation is also strengthened by the percentage of University enrolling and graduating within the expected time among men and women.

As we have previously considered the percentage of 42% middle readers as critical, we hope that it will increase up to 50% or more. This low percentage comes out from the sample of young people between 11 and 19: it is easy to understand the situation for children under 11 because of their still limited reading skill but this is not acceptable for those of 19 who are the most of population in Italy. Consequences of this situation are caused by the lack of such an important basic skill and are very bad for those people’s public life and their understanding of political and economic life. This becomes more critical if we consider the rapidity of society changing in our era. The more is the rapidity of society changing, the more our reading skill must be quick in order to understand this changing and decode and interpret written texts properly. Our adult citizens, those who do not have regular reading habits, will have big difficulties to understand registers such as formal, bureaucratic, legislative, legal and media.

What we have just said is confirmed if we consider also different geographical areas: in the South and the Islands we have lower percentage
compared to the North. This difference in the data shows easily the same difference in the economic resources and in the future economic growth. In fact we can say that where there is a great percentage of strong readers there is also a stronger economy and better chances of growth.

Therefore, the even small reduction of percentage from 14,3% in 2014 to 13,7 % in 2015 among the strong readers in Italy makes the general situation more complicated in a perspective of possible recover. In this case not even the support coming from the introduction of new technologies may help in changing and improving reading habits. In Italy specific data reveal that only 8,2% in the last year has downloaded e-books or has bought on-line books. According to the marketing on-line experts in this 8,2% there is a severe percentage of fidelity buyers, not revealed by the Institute of Statistics, that would reduce this data. This causes reading data from on-line sale to be useless compared to data from traditional ISTAT inquiries.

In conclusion, the importance of reading, motivation and increasing of reading skill are fundamental for the growth of our society. There is a direct connection between reading and participation to the culture. The strong readers use culture in a stronger way and at the same time they participate actively in the cultural activities and life of the places they visit or they live in. Such aspect is strictly connected with the economic life for they support offers and expenses of cultural, social and touristic services in a certain place, with positive effects for all those who work in these fields.

3. SCHOOL ACTIVITIES

It is so evident the important and central role of School in order to improve reading for fun and motivate it. Every school works for it though the results are different according to the area where the school is and the kind of students.

As well it is very important the role of teachers who are themselves more or less sensitive to reading as a free time activity and so they should be a concrete example. If they do not read for personal fun they will not be able to motivate their students properly.

School is a real community in which even a small group of motivated teachers can involve both other teachers and students. This way they can first
involve other teachers to enjoy reading again in their free time in order to become positive and motivating examples for their students too.

From what we have said before, an interesting thought comes out: school should be lived as an educating community and not as a block-organization of classes and different sections. That is why it is important to organize involving activities for both teachers and students. That means activities for open groups and free choice of participation, anyway supervised by teachers.

EDUCANDOIT staff’s experience, done within a school like Laura Lanza Comprehensive School, has showed the effectiveness of activities such the ones described before with a public quality. In fact it has been observed that young students, according to cultural examples offered by the media, enjoy taking part to events both as protagonists and as audience. For this reason since 2000-2001 there is a public event in Carini (Pa) in the last week of May every year: a reading event in which students read pieces loud in front of other schoolmates and their parents.

3.1 The Importance of Extra-curriculum Activities for Increasing the Joy of Reading

As a starting point it should be assumed that, although it is basic to motivate and foster the pleasure of reading outside of an institutional school context, it’s from both school and families that this pleasure can spring up. And in particular contexts, where disadvantage and basic living necessities forbid the acquisition of such a pleasure, the school itself, despite of this, becomes the main promoter of extra school events. So what is important is to make arise in the students an increasing love for reading and for books themselves and this can be accomplished through a strong cooperation that schools need to promote and acquire with the traditional “book homes”, bookshops and public libraries. A visit to a bookshops or to a library to choose books for the school library or for the class library or attending an event as the meeting with authors has to planned to get students in touch with a world that, in their daily family life, can become farther and farther. So the students have to get familiar with the atmosphere and the set of a bookshops or a library, having the chance to choose a book, to explore among several kinds of literature, being aware that apart their smartphones and TV there is another world, a world which is not so far from their own but that can be integrated in their daily routine. As there is a large
literature for both children and teenagers surrounded by a parallel world made up of movies, TV series and videogames it can be simpler to get students closer to reading books through the topics or the characters they love most. This could be the starting point to create and motivate students taking as basis their own passions and attitudes linked to other worlds closer to their daily experience. So a visit to a bookshop can be initially planned searching for the books on the topic they care for a first time, searching for a different book related to the previous topic or a book of the same author the second time and so on. The frequency of attending the bookshops can improve the building up of a future reader and can involve families too when school will not fulfill this task but the involvement in being familiar with books will be acquired. In cooperation with libraries and bookshops it can be planned a meeting with authors when sections of their books are introduced and read to young audiences. This can involve more deeply students in reading as it is also the occasion to realize that behind the books there is a person whose main aim is to tell a story to an audience and to feel how they react. Reading aloud is the basis also of events such as “storytelling “an ancient technique belonging to the oral tradition which is having space nowadays, in all Europe, promoted especially by school and municipality librarians, to recover the pleasure of reading in a world where all goes on too fast to stop and think over. At its core, “Storytelling” is the art of using language, vocalization, and/or physical movement and gesture to reveal the elements and images of a story to a specific, live audience. A central, unique aspect of storytelling is its reliance on the audience to develop specific visual imagery and details to complete and co-create the story. In order to capture the attention of young unused readers visual and audio inducements prove to have success and to rebuild the attitude to reading that has been lost so far. Of course education to reading has to be supported by families and of course all these activities made with children can also urge parents and relatives to get closer to reading attitudes.

Stories began with the oral tradition, as they were passed on by being heard and retold. Later, people began to write the stories down, but it is always charming to hear stories told out loud. Everyday people tell a story to someone and young people do it as well. So to increase the pleasure of reading a starting point can be this as well. Based on this School can organize its own sections of loud reading to motivate students towards dramatised reading and EDUCANDOIT’s staff has always organized such activities in the Auditorium at Laura Lanza School. Honestly all these other activities would not have had great results without this yearly event dated the last week of May, as
we have already said, at the medieval Castle in Carini. The name of the event is “Reading night at the Castle” and its aim is clear. For this special occasion local municipality allows us to use some rooms in the castle for the students show in an evocative scene at night from 8pm to midnight. Moreover parents prepare some food and drinks for the midnight buffet after the performances. This way all school community is involved: teachers, families participate someway to the organization of the event and also to the surveillance. It is a very evocative night especially for those who have practiced loud reading during the school year. We have to underline that loud reading is not acting but something different.

Each of the readers has to have the book chosen to be read in his/her hand and read the passage she or he choose showing that there is no reading by heart. This aims at giving centrality to the book as an object and as means to convey feelings and emotions.

According to what we have shared, we may suggest that it is of great relevance to create cooperation with private and public institutions that may offer spaces out of school to realize supporting and motivating reading activities assuming that, in any case, the starting point spreads up from School itself. To know in advance that on an established day you should perform a loud reading of a piece from a chosen book in front of a public is itself a motivating element and a support to seriously fell engaged in that. Availability of spaces out of school depends on two elements: cooperation among different institutions on one side and creativity on the other. At the same time it is very important to pay attention on the organization aspects. Organizing a performing event in a big hall where the presence of many people will reduce the sound needs a proper
surround audio system otherwise the whole performance may result poor and there may be a general feeling of delusion and failure. For this reason, you should consider first what the area offers and then make your choice according to a proper organization. It would be much better a less prestigious place instead of a more charming but less equipped one. From usual spaces such as libraries, government or noble palaces, museums, galleries and bookshops to any other space reading performance can add a value. For example there may be a double aspect in a reading performance organized in a hospital where at the same time it would be very nice to entertain the patients. Much more nice if we think of it in a children’s hospital.

4. WORKING WITH BOOKS TO DEVELOP CREATIVITY

A book can be a powerful device if “manipulated” properly. Working with books can increase the creativity in young people as well as the pleasure and desire for reading more. As previously stated the desire to read a book can be born from the choice of the proper book. In fact if we think about the success of teenagers books such as Harry Potter’s (J.K.Rowling 1997-2007) in the past or Twilight (S.Mayer 2005-2008) or Hunger Games’ (S. Collins 2008-2010) saga in most recent years we realize how important is the connection among different medias in nowadays teenagers’ life and so it is difficult to say if the movie or the books have taken one or the other more advantage but it is really patent how the interest in books have to be supported by most common medias to teenagers, It’s also the case of a wide range of literature linked to some of the most popular videogames such as the HALO (A.VV. 2001-2015) saga taken form one of the
most popular videogames for youngsters. So in order to increase the habit to read a book working and exploiting their contents, in an inverted order as the examples before, can be really useful, in particular choosing as basis a popular book. Reading comprehension techniques can be really useful to create a basis to work at school or at home. They are based on the fact that a text can be exploited to not only search the main meaning but also to understand better how the characters act and feel. Filling charts and answering questions on the passage to be read manipulating the stories changing dates and times and renewing the plot from a different points of view with guided activities can increase curiosity towards the way in which a book is written or can be read. These activities can lead to the creation of new stories based on already stated plots using different digital devices such as Storybird (https://storybird.com).

Storybird is a really interesting tool as it gives not only the chance to summarize in a visual effective way a story, a book the students read, but it gives also the opportunity to build up a new story using images which can give tips for their creativity. Moreover it has in its platform several ready books made by people using it that can help younger reader to increase their curiosity towards reading and writing. The storybook is made up of pages with images and narrative parts; it can be composed of different pages and can have different layouts. It is made up for each user but in particular for educators and provides a virtual class group to work in it collaboratively. Each student can contribute to create a group story or can produce his/her own personal one. At the end of the work they will have an online storybook made by themselves. They can exchange and read each other’s story but they can also show it as slides and use it as a support for reading in a narrative way or they can print the pages and use it as support for reading it aloud to their schoolmates. Moreover they will have the chance to share on the net platform their products and read different titles published in it comparing what they did to what is already at their disposal. This tool works on the main smartphones too and in this way, they can have a basic library along with them made also by themselves. Images are inspirational and students are better disposed to take time to read or write as well as they know they can do it also on their mobiles. Another activity of that kind can be accomplished through the use of the TITANPAD platform as well. Titanpad (www.titanpad.com) gives the chance to write in collaborative way on a digital white pad and to post comments on one side of the screen as the work goes on. It can be used in all devices, tablets, personal computers and smartphones, and
this has a basic relevance as it is really close to the teenagers’ daily life, such as the Storybird tool.

It’s only simpler and more immediate and it can be a really meaningful starting point to implement reading and much more writing skills. Nonetheless, it is patent that writing strengthens creativity and creativity feeds on reading too. Moreover both skills are so closely related that developing one strictly implies the subsequent development of the other.

4.1 Reading – between the Tradition and Innovations

Among recent activities to support reading, a part from the very common story-telling and the activities that involve professional story tellers, there are new ideas for new tools.

A new one that is a good solution between tradition and innovation is the technological hand-chart, made by an Italian company, Edu-Tech. In their official web site we read (9):”Edu-Tech is a young company that studies and gives interactive and multimedia solutions for training and didactics to educational institutions, academies, companies and public organizations. Our aim is giving technological sized solutions to turn to account people’s talent and skills, helping cooperative learning, communication and personal growth”. Even if school is not the only educational place, they made the technological version of the traditional hand-chart of the wandering story
teller. It is called “I-Theatre” and it has been shown at London BETT 2012 (British Education Training and Technologies). It is a new “integrated interactive system to create multimedia stories”, thought for children between 4 and 10.

This hand-chart has a system that makes it a small lab and let the students create stories starting from their drawings that become animated, to get to narrative links among images.

To know it better you can see the following site where there is a demonstrating video: http://www.i-theatre.org/it/gallery/video.html or on youtube: https://youtu.be/WDBTT3GH4kk.

CONCLUSIONS

The final conclusion may refer to the motivation to realize reading activities. As said before, no studying nor comprehension is possible without reading skill, both silent and loud; it is necessary to recover reading as psychophysical health. Reading books not for studying or professional reasons but as a free time activity in order to:

1. support creativity,
2. stimulate fantasy,
3. extend individual imagination,
4. improve sensitiveness,
5. promote inclusion and tolerance,
6. create a cultural basis that helps specific competence.

In spite of the several inquiries and studies about reading, its techniques, its characteristics, its specific importance in pedagogic application, statistics about reading habits are still not actual anymore at least since 1990s. At the end of this decade, we agree with the famous linguistic Tullio De Mauro that gave a different analysis. From his data, reading habits do not depend on the usual reasons such as social conditions (middle class or lower class) or geographical area (North, Centre, South). De Mauro noticed that using dialects instead of Italian, parents’ education, presence of books at home, are not responsible for
the variations registered in the country. He thinks that “quality of teaching” is real important, so the School. The bet on reading is the same on the power of the school system to give a fundamental skill: linguistic competence. According to this idea: better is the individual linguistic competence better professional competences, interpersonal relationship and happy life will be. And reading is the way to get to the point.

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