Reading today: what's the meaning?

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Inspiring connections: learning, libraries & literacy

SCHOOL LIBRARIES: A NETWORK BUILT IN PARTNERSHIP

SLNP

- SLNP was created in 1996. Its purpose was the installation of school libraries in every school levels, conceived as multimedia resource centres for the use and production of documents in all formats.

School library Network Office

The programme is co-ordinated by the School Libraries Network Office in articulation with other departments of the Ministry of Education, namely the Educational Regional Administration.

Services offered

- ✓Installation/re-adaptation works (Municipality/ Ministry of Education)
- ✓Financial support for the acquisition of equipment and collections (Ministry of Education)
- ✓Selection of resources and technical treatment of materials (Public Library / Schools)

Services offered

The School Libraries Support Service (SLSS) provides:

✓ Human resources (technical staff / teacher librarian)

✓Cultural activities

✓Circulation and lending services

✓Training in literacy programs (reading, information, technological...)

✓Help and consulting in organisation and management

Services offered

Support through Internet web site:

- ✓ **Electronic resources and documents concerning school libraries;**
- ✓ **promotion of school libraries web sites;**
- ✓ **dissemination of best practices;**
- ✓ **discussion list;**
- ✓ **catalogues network.**

Services offered

✓catalogues networking:

creating an interface in our web site with access to all catalogues.

✓ Goals:

- allow the access to school community catalogues
- allow the access to all the network
- allow a catalogue quality regulation
- allow an easier registration through the download of the others schools catalogues

School libraries

The acquisition of reading habits, information skills, knowledge, attitudes and values necessary to the integral development of the individual concerns all libraries.

But where does it all begin?

Reading literacy is defined as understanding, using and reflecting written texts, in order to achieve one´s goals, to develop one´s knowledge and potential and to participate in society. This definition goes beyond the traditional notion of decoding information and literal interpretation of what is written towards more applied tasks.

In Learning for tomorrow´s world - first results from PISA 2003

What's the meaning of reading in our society?

Which challenges to schools?

Text

Image

Sound

✓A raising number of young people has reading difficulties.

✓Dissonance between factors related to reading and the technological, visual and immediate culture of present days.

✓Contradiction between the ability to deal with multiple reading screens and illiteracy levels.

✓Reading representation at school.

Should school libraries only answer to curricula needs?

Should they only develop functional and instrumental reading?

We believe not!

“The school library provides information and ideas, that are fundamental to functioning successfully in our increasingly information and knowledge-based present day society. The school library equips students with lifelong learning skills and develops their imagination, thereby enabling them to live as responsible citizens.”

The IFLA/Unesco School Library Guidelines, Mission

As it is stated, there's no real opposition between the acquisition of reading habits and the acquisition of information skills and competencies.

Reading literature today

In fact, the reading of fiction and poetry contributes to develop a flexible mind and for the construction of real literacy competencies:

The contemporary neuroscience believes that reading is the best exercise for the brain, for it obliges us to use several cognitive processes at the same time; and above all, the reading of literature: romances and novels make the brain imagine and deal with different kinds of décors, facts, interactions and characters.

And how should School Libraries deal with the different kinds of reading?

First of all, the collections: the school library collections must include, with special relevance for the earlier levels, a strong percentage of fiction books and documents in other supports.

And how should School Libraries deal with the different kinds of reading?

With the adequate collections policy, the school library can develop information literacy competences and capacities of knowledge building, learning its different ways of organization and presentation, according to the scientific areas and the materials in which it is registered.

And how should School Libraries deal with the different kinds of reading?

At the same time, it can work in order to create lasting reading habits for pleasure and leisure.

So, what can we do?

The Portuguese School Libraries Network Office is developping an experimental programme to promote the reading levels of students in the context of the school activities – 14 Schools in two different towns of the country are participating in this programme.

So, what can we do?

Conditions:

- Teacher's training in children's and youth literature, expressive reading, etc.

- Acquisition of a number of books per child, selected by literature experts.

- Evaluation of the children's reading habits evolution and its impact in the learning process.

So, what can we do?

Methodologies :

- Use of reading strategies, daily and unexpectedly, inside or outside the classroom;

-Reading without any curricula relationship;

Is not wisdom based on being well informed?

Platão, 360 bc