

Title: Boys Reading [BR]

Project type: Erasmus+ / Cooperation for innovation and the exchange of good practices – Strategic Partnerships

Ref. no.: 2014-1-HR01-KA200-007171

Promoter /Coordinator: Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences, University of Split, Croatia

Actual stage: in progress

Total project cost: 239.855 Euro

Total expenditure for the University of Pitești: 23.260 Euro

Local coordinator for the University of Pitești: Assoc. Professor Dr. Dumitru CHIRLEȘAN

Summary:

European educational systems have long been striving to ensure equitable learning opportunities for every student. Providing equitable opportunities for girls or migrant students has traditionally been at the centre of this effort; providing them for boys is a relatively recent aspect, but it is increasingly becoming an issue of outmost urgency. Throughout Europe, there is dire need for special attention to adolescent boys' literacy development and attitudes, since this group is more likely to be at risk.

Evidence from around Europe and the globe consistently shows that boys have the lowest scores on standardized reading tests (OECD, 2001 & 2009; Perie, Grigg, & Donahue, 2005; Brozo, 2010). The latest PISA survey, in all 65 participating countries, reports that boys have lower reading attainment than girls. This international survey showed that half of the boys fail to reach Level 3, compared to only one third of the girls; Level 3 "is associated with being able to perform the kinds of tasks that are commonly demanded of young and older adults in their everyday lives" (Garbe, 2011). Garbe observes that in the OECD sample the gender reading achievement gap is 39 PISA score points on average, which roughly corresponds to one year of schooling.

Bronzo (2010) declares that the following sobering facts may no longer be ignored:

- Boys are 3 to 5 times more likely than girls to be diagnosed with reading disabilities;
- Boys dominate the rolls of remedial reading classes;
- Boys are 50% more likely to be retained a grade than girls;

- Boys form the overwhelming majority of high-school dropouts and delinquents;

Numerous studies connect adolescent boys' academic failure to their low reading engagement, pointing out that secondary-school boys are the group most likely to state that reading is boring, that they find it hard to find interesting books, and that they only read at school. Since "engaged readers have a much greater chance of staying in school, expanding career and life options, and maturing into self-actualized adults" (Brozo, 2010) the need to set boys' reading engagement at the top of our priorities becomes evident. The Boys Reading project focuses on this top priority.

Rationale of the Project

To address the below-mentioned objectives, the Boys Reading project strives to make reading an integral part in the life of boys aged 11-15, who are currently unenthusiastic about books. The Boys Reading consortium asserts that this can only be achieved if teenage boys acquire control over their reading and are enabled to choose their readings from books that satisfy their actual needs and interests. Addressing the needs of boys effectively requires dialogue and the collective effort of all partners in the education process, including government, educators, parents, and community members. Among these partners, however, educators play a particularly important role. The Boys Reading project targets all stakeholders but focuses especially on educators, enabling them to provide classroom experiences that respond to the interests, needs, and learning styles of boys, and to engage boys and girls equally as readers and writers.

Objectives:

The Boys Reading project aims to make reading an integral part in the life of boys aged 11-15, who are currently unenthusiastic about books. Boys Reading asserts that this can only be achieved if teenage boys acquire control over their reading and are enabled to choose from books that address their needs and interests. The Boys Reading project draws its general objectives directly from the guidelines set by the EU High Level Group of Experts on Literacy (2012). Namely, the project strives to convince, encourage and educate all stakeholders, and especially educators of boys aged 11-15 to:

1. Raise the motivation and interest of boys to read and write in order to close the gender gap;
2. Open up schools to appealing materials, including digital ones, to make reading and writing relevant to boys' individual preferences;
3. Facilitate contact with male role-models engaging in literacy; and
4. Develop initiatives aimed at making language development fun and appealing for adolescent boys.

Outcomes:

In order to achieve the above objectives, the project will train educators of boys aged 11-15 (including literacy and special education teachers, and school librarians) through:

1. A Research Report on effective reading promotion to teenage boys
2. The Boys Reading Toolkit that features

I. Introduction to Literature for Teenage Boys

II. Review of Significant Texts for Boys

III. Guidelines and Ideas for Successful Reading Promotion to Boys

IV. Guidelines and Ideas for Incorporating Boys' Literature in the Curriculum

V. Sample Actions and Activities for Reading Promotion to Boys

VI. Boys Reading Case Studies

3. Boys Reading Teacher Professional Development Modules

4. An interactive portal with resources and material in partner languages.

Partnership:

1. Sveuciliste u Splitu, Filozofski Fakultet, HR

2. Enter-European Network for Transfer and Exploitation of European Project Results, AT

3. Centre For Advancement Of Research And Development In Educational Technology
LTD-CARDET, CY

4. Instituto Politécnico de Castelo Branco, PT

5. INNOVADE LI LTD, CY

6. Uniwersytet Lodzki, PL

7. Ekpaideutiria Douka, GR

8. Universitatea din Pitesti, RO