

THE PROJECT ACTIVITY IN EDUCATION OF READING IN FIRST GRADE

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Abstract: The intent of the paper is to test first-graders' reading comprehension skills based on a school project through work. In the reading classes students have worked with a teacher mainly on modeling practical situations that are close to the project activities. In both cases, the team work is important as well as the cooperation so the final product of their joint work can be presented before the audience and they can become deeply involved into the project creative atmosphere. The pupils practically demonstrate the knowledge, skills and creativity acquired so far in the learning process for the implementation of a learning project in reading education. As interactive teaching methods have recently become more popular and applicable in the educational environment, for the first grade students the most suitable option for collective creative events was chosen to work in groups, where students are learning to work in a team, listening to others` opinion, making suggestions in favor of their common goal - the successful completion of the project, to write brief conclusions from the achievements in the process, to point out the positive aspects of this type of endeavor and to realize that when united , it is easier to overcome difficulties. By all means, the conflict situations that arose in the process of work are not to be underestimated, but the observations showed that the truth is born in the dispute and the young artists get used to respect each other, to have a civilized dialogue without being rude and intolerant of their friend. You are. In other words, group activities unite students and allow them to show what they are capable of and how the different skills formed in each of them contribute to creating a final creative product to be proud of, because the joint efforts aimed in one direction, they bring satisfaction, success and new ideas.

Keywords: project activity, interactive methods, training, reading, creativity.

1. INTRODUCTION

The important when reading with comprehension is the ability of the student to answer correctly the answers of the teacher or the questionnaire prepared in advance for this purpose, by the text content. According to the knowledge and age characteristics of the first graders, short texts are preferred as they are easy to read and understand after reading them independently.

The conditions set by the teacher to the students in the first grade for performing quality reading comprehension are:

1. Reading the text at least twice to understand the main idea imparted in its content.
2. The reading should be thorough and not unreasonably performed, i.e. to be read at a speed at which the students should understand the information in the text, and be aware of the events that happened in history.
3. The student should read both the text correctly and aloud correctly enough, to pronounce the words correctly, with appropriate diction, to observe the intonation and to strive not for intermittent but for smooth reading to better understand what is happening. In the work, while at the same time focusing on the relationships between the characters. All this requires the student to devote himself completely to the text, focusing and concentrating only on the act of reading, to achieve valuable reading with an understanding in which he can answer the questions correctly. Prima facie, such an endeavor does not seem at all difficult, but for the young student is associated with the investment of extreme mental stress, will and motivation to strive for positive results.

2. CREATIVE ACTIVITY IN EDUCATION IN READING

After mastering the above set of skills in reading instruction, we start to provoke and test the creative abilities of students, challenging them after getting acquainted with the content of a text, to think and structure themselves to 5 questions to it, which should contain closed and open questions. In this way, students test in practice both their reading comprehension skills and their creative inclinations. Constantly, passing the stages, starting from reading comprehension to reaching the combination of reading and creativity, first-graders reach the point where, having mastered a set of knowledge and techniques for applying what they have learned, given the condition of the task, are aimed at an even higher level of personal and creative development through the implementation of project work in the learning process.

3. INFLUENCE OF INTERACTIVE TEACHING METHODS IN THE WORK ON SCHOOL PROJECTS

Project school activity requires the introduction of students to some of the most commonly used interactive methods in school, including flash, brainstorming, writing ideas, group work, essay, avalanche, traffic light, brain maps, idea drawing, role-playing games, etc.

In this paper, the emphasis is on working in groups, as this interactive method aims to work collectively, not just individually, to make decisions agreed with all members of the group, to collect and select information with the consent of all teammates, to present visually - with a presentation of their achievements in a synthesized, summarized form, where the facts are accompanied by evidence - appropriate to the topic of development applications and conclusions that reflect the most important points of the project.

Before proceeding to the actual project activity, it is desirable to first answer the question: What are interactive methods and why is their application so widespread in the learning process? Interactive methods are useful for teachers in that they contribute to conducting learning in which students:

- to commit to participate with desire and interest in the learning process;
- to offer students training that is fun, interesting, entertaining, informative and useful enough;
- to get used to working in a team, because in this way they will be able to get to know each other better, to adapt more quickly to the different learning environment, which requires them to work in groups in the planned project activities and purposeful, not chaotic work on the tasks fixed to the activities;
- to build relationships based on mutual respect and understanding in the process of work.

By their main point, interactive methods "encourage students to participate in various activities, stimulate discussions and hold their attention", as well as "connect with interaction, feedback, student engagement, search for common solutions" (Savova, R., 2008: 96-97).

In addition to the above, interactivity also refers to "the interaction between the trainer and the trainee, as well as between the learners themselves or in a broader sense - between the members of a study (working) group / class" (Gyurova, V., 2006: 39- 40).

4. STAGES IN THE IMPLEMENTATION OF PROJECT- BASED TRAINING

Considering the above so far regarding interactive methods and their importance for reading and group work training, it should be noted that for the successful implementation of project-based training it is important to comply with the following requirements:

1. Project preparation:

- consideration of the topic;
- project content;
- formulation of working questions.

2. Implementation of the project work:

- search for information and materials;
- project preparation;
- performance planning.

3. Project presentation:

- explanation of the project;
- presentation of the project results;
- discussion of the project work and the result (Simon, P., 2006: 8).

In addition we should mention that students also master skills for:

1. Purposeful work, including:

- independent finding of information;
- planning of the individual stages of the project;
- implementation of the planned;
- presentation and explanation of the results of the work.

2. Work discipline, expressed in:

- commitments;
- continuous performance of the started activity in order to obtain good results;
- accurate and precise execution of the tasks assigned to the project;
- purposeful work on the planned activities in order to complete the project successfully within the specified deadlines.

3. Practical thinking for which it is important:

- skillful combination of thinking and action;

- finding the problems and looking for an alternative to solve them;
- distinguishing the important from the unimportant in the course of the work.

4. Team work in which the student learns:

- how to work together with other people in a team;
- how to evaluate the contribution of others;
- how to present their own ideas and those of the other participants in the group (Simon, P., 2006: 7).

5. STIMULATING THE CREATIVE ACTIVITY OF THE STUDENTS THROUGH THE WORK ON SCHOOL PROJECTS

The most essential and valuable in project development is the manifestation of creativity in each participant. Depending on the purpose and objectives of the project, students must be creative in their implementation, because ultimately what activities will be included and implemented, how they are consistent with the project design and what contribution they would have in terms of results, depends on whether the first-graders have managed to complete what they have planned and to what extent they are satisfied with what has been achieved and at the same time motivated to continue working on educational projects.

Creativity is the basis of a successful project, and the imagination of the young researcher is a major factor supporting the overall process - from setting the topic to the final completion of the project endeavor, in the course of which often arise problematic situations that are resolved by applying the right goal is approached by the person in charge of the group, whose task is not only to guide them during work and to alleviate tensions and conflicts between them.

Therefore, Y. Stoimenova points out that: "Desire or motivation is the initial phase of the creative process" (Stoimenova, Y., 2005: 30).

Undoubtedly, if the student lacks interest in taking up any creative activity, there is no way we can help him discover his potential and believe in his abilities. Lack of motivation is a sign of absolute disinterest in what is happening. When such a student is included in a project with others, then there are prerequisites for problematic situations that lead to unnecessary stress, lack of normal communication in the group, chaotic performance of tasks, redistribution of responsibilities of other team members at the expense of passive student and partial implementation of the project or unsuccessful implementation of the overall work on it.

In this context, V. Chileva mentions that: "A problematic situation can be a source of an unlimited number of problems" (Chileva, V., 2018: 12).

In order to avoid aggravation of a problem or the emergence of additional ones, the need to include all participants in the group in the start-up project, the desire to work and voluntary assistance in the list of activities prepared by the responsible person, the manifestation of tolerance for the interlocutor in the process of communication and avoidance of unnecessary conflicts that would only hinder their common work. Of course, the problematic situations that arise in the process of project development are resolved quickly, when suggestions are given by everyone, they hear each other, express opinions, which are analyzed according to the case and unanimously make adequate decisions to accelerate rather than delay in time its completion.

With first graders from VII Secondary school "Kuzman Shapkarev", Blagoevgrad, we started to work on a reading project, whose main goal is aimed not only at testing reading comprehension skills and testing creativity, as they faced the challenge after getting acquainted with the content of the text to write 5 questions to be closed - with an optional answer and open - with the possibility of a free answer.

The class that we conducted the study at had 20 students. We separated the pupils into 5 teams, and in each team there was one person in charge to control the activities of his teammates.

The tasks set for the first graders relate to:

1. Test of reading comprehension skills, where students in groups have a dialogue with each other, asking questions written by a student named by the responsible person on the worksheet provided for this purpose, to make it easier for them afterward to formulate the final questions to the test.

2. Assigning responsibilities to each member of the team by the person in charge of the group, who monitors and supports the work process with all his teammates. Therefore, if the group leader guides them, the second participant reads the text, the third notes key points from it to help structure the questions and suggested answers, and the fourth teammate thinks about learning a lesson from the text to complete the learning project.

3. Presentation of the project through a presentation, which includes the main highlights of it - facts, applications, and summaries to other classmates or participants in another project, so that they can exchange mutual creative ideas and experiences.

During the project, the ability of each participant to read with understanding and the level of creativity was monitored.

In order to determine the reading comprehension skills and their creative talents, a 3-level assessment scale consisting of the following designations was established:

1. Low level of formed reading skills with comprehension and zero creative activity. The student does not navigate correctly in the information read, fails to write a single question - with a supposed or free answer.

2. Average level of demonstrated knowledge from the conducted test and skills for shown creativity. Understands the content of the information read, but finds it difficult to apply it in practice, while at the same time partially coping with the creative task that requires structuring questions and answers to the text.

3. High level of distinctive reading skills with comprehension and creative activity. He fully masters the content of the text and easily separates the questions to it.

First graders work with the text "The most precious fruit". After getting acquainted with its content, the students had to come up with 5 questions, and it was their right to decide how many of them will be closed and how many will be opened.

Based on the research, it turned out that in general the students showed a high level of reading skills with comprehension and creative activity, which is visible from the table.

Table №1: Study results conducted with first graders

Number of students in a class	Levels of research	Low level	Avarage level	Hihg level
20	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Low level ✓ A varage level ✓ High level 	0%	20%	80%

Regarding the gruops work, we could summarized that the students in all 5 teams showed self-discipline, responsibility, diligence and showed enviabile creative skills in preparing the questionnaire for the folk tale "The most precious fruit". The teams got along well and managed to complete and present their work within the pre-planned deadlines.

6. CONCLUSION

In conclusion, the importance and benefit of project activities should be emphasized, because they not only support the work of teachers, but also develop students' imagination, unite them and form useful qualities for them, such as responsibility, diligence, tolerance, respect, trust and successful completion. Of the undertaking undertaken, no matter how much effort it may cost them. In addition to the above, they realize that it is easier to find solutions to shared problems and difficulties in the work process, no matter how serious they may seem at first, are easily overcome. In other words, there are no impossible things for a truly cohesive team. That is why the proverb says: "Many hands make light work."

Annex № 1 *The most precious fruit* *(Bulgarian folk tale)*

A father had three sons. One day he called them and told them:
- I will give each of you a bag with gold coins. You must go around the world and find the most precious fruit.

The three sons took the bags and went on three different directions to search for the most precious fruit.

After three years they finally returned home.

The oldest brother:

- The most precious fruit is the sweetest one.

The middle brother:

- The most precious fruit is the rarest one.

- And, you, son, what did you bring me? Why are you coming back empty-handed?

The youngest brother:

- It's a true father! But the money you gave me I did not spend buying expensive fruits.

I went to school. The fruits I picked are unseen because they are in my heart and my mind.

The father was very happy when he heard those words.

- You brought me the most precious fruits, son! You deserve the reward. For there are no more precious fruits than those the knowledge gives to men.

Annex №2
Questions to the text, structured by the teams
First team

1. How many sons did the father have?
A) two
B) three
C) four

2. What order did the father give to his sons?
A) He sent them around the world to seek their fortune.
B) He ordered them to search for the world's greatest wealth.
C) He ordered them to look for the most precious fruit in the world.

3. Which of the three sons returns home empty-handed?
A) the youngest brother
B) the big brother
C) the middle brother

4. Write down what the youngest brother spent the money on?

.....
.....

5. Answer why the father gives the reward to his youngest son?

.....
.....

Moral of the story: There is nothing more precious than the homeland and more expensive than knowledge.

Second team

1. How many sons are in the story?
A) one
B) three
C) two

2. What does the father give to each of the sons?
A) He gives them diamonds.
B) He gives them food.
C) Give them a bag of coins.

3. Answer why the youngest son did not spend the money on precious fruit?

.....
.....

4. Add the following sentence:

“The fruits I picked are not visible because they are”

5. What is the most precious fruit?
A) knowledge
B) money
C) understanding

Moral of the story: The power of knowledge is the most important for the people's successes.

Third team

1. What did the father give to his three sons?

- A) He gave them clothes of gold.
- B) He gave them a bag of coins.
- C) He gave them one horse each.

2. Add the sentence:

“Go around the world and search for

3. After how many years did the sons return to their father?

- A) They returned home after two years.
- B) They returned to him after a year.
- C) They returned after three years.

4. Write why the youngest son went to school?

.....

5. What is the most precious fruit that a son brings to his father?

- A) knowledge
- B) diligence
- C) respect

Moral of the story: He who learns will succeed.

Fourth team

1. Write where the father sent his three sons?

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2. Which of the three brothers returns home empty-handed?

- A) the second brother
- B) the third brother
- C) the first brother

3. Indicate what the youngest son spent his father's money on?

.....

4. Where are the fruits gathered from the little brother hidden?

- A) They are hidden in his heart and mind.
- B) They are hidden in the books he carries with him.
- C) They are hidden in the bag with which he went around the world in search of the most precious fruit.

5. What are the most expensive fruits?

- A) exotic fruits
- B) apples and pears
- C) the fruits of knowledge

Moral of the story: Knowledge is a diamond that shines brightly for the one who owns it.

Fifth team

1. What was in the brothers' purses?

- A) diamonds
- B) gold
- C) coins

2. What did the three brothers went searching for around the world?

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3. What did the youngest son spend the money on??

.....

.....

4. Where did the youngest of the brothers go?

- A) He started working for a craftsman.
- B) Went to a school.
- C) Entered service in the royal palace.

5. Which of the three sons brought the most precious fruit to the father?

- A) the youngest son
- B) the eldest son
- C) the middle son

Moral of the story: Knowledge, rationality and wisdom can not be bought with money

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