

The Connection between The Book Parade Project and Vocabulary Enrichment in 3rd Grade Pupils

Pnina Asulin

Abstract:

The Book Parade project is a national project, which has been going on for seventeen years, since the year 1994, and it is a project aimed at encouraging reading among students of all age levels (1-12 grades). Schools throughout the country choose to participate in the parade, and they are asked to follow clear and concrete stages throughout the years of the project, leading to the Peak Day in which they choose their favorite books, together with a school ceremony.

The parade takes place in several stages – first, the book list is sent to the participating schools, second – the teacher-librarians make suggestions regarding the list and pass their ideas on to the classes, and lastly the vote and the selection of the favorite book(s).

Peak day is voting day – schools get a form to fill after the voting has taken place. On this day books take center stage and ceremonies are taking place around each book. The success of the project is measured according to the number of school who sign up and the activities surrounding the books.

In 2004, 740 schools participated in the parade, of which 100 were in the Arab sector (which uses a different book list). In 2005, 850 schools participated, with 120 schools in the Arab sector.

The aim of this study is to examine the links between reading literature and language enrichment among students, in other words – do students who read more have a richer vocabulary and are they more successful in language studies and in school all in all. The findings of this study may have a practical significance as to the nature of presenting students with books, reading aloud to students, becoming familiar with different genres, and free reading (under guidance, if needed). We see daily in our classes pupils with very poor vocabularies, difficulties in expressing themselves orally and in writing, in formulating answers to questions and in preparing projects, and we therefore believe that students do need to be encouraged to become independent readers.

Not one of the schools that did not take part in the project has improved their post-project questionnaire results, while those schools that did, showed a real improvement in the average mark on the post-project questionnaire.

These findings show that participation in the book parade project has a palpable positive influence on pupils' language skills. There can be no doubt that children who are more familiar with books – are enriching their vocabulary.

More such projects should be carried out even more schools, and it must be made sure that every school has a teacher specifically in charge of this project, a teacher who will enter each and every classroom and make sure that pupils do read and do know all the books. Children must be familiar with as many books as possible since every book contributes its own vocabulary of words and sentences, thus helping the child to enrich his or her language.

This study adds its input to many others which show the efficacy of independent reading amongst pupils.

Book reading improves and enriches vocabulary among students and improves their task performance in general.

System number: 1141181

אסו.קש תשס"ז E028.55