

2. Goals and structure of this brochure

Reading and writing in the first language, as described above, are not abilities that one can well forego in the migration, like any other skill. That students be able to obtain and work with written information in their first language is a rather indispensable prerequisite for their holistic bilingual-bicultural development. In addition, a good mastery of the first language also supports the acquisition of literal abilities in the school language of the host country. As a highly effective selection competence, it is also the basis for school success in regular education classes.

The present publication attempts to support the teachers in their demanding task of promoting the students' ability to read in their first language and to discover the joy of reading. Moreover, it will provide instructors with examples and ways to purposefully further different areas of reading competencies, such as improving reading fluency, textual comprehension, as well as discovering the joy of reading creatively designed texts with their students.

The introduction to this workbook offers some insights into important issues and aspects of current reading didactics with a focus on certain points that are of specific importance for HLT. The second, practical part includes 30 specific practice suggestions for the areas of reading promotion, reading training and literary-cultural education. These suggestions are intended specifically for the teachers. They can be implemented easily without time-consuming burdens on classroom instruction and with reading materials which are being discussed anyway. Most of the suggestions can be implemented – with some age-specific adjustments – for students of all age levels. This approach responds to the circumstances in HLT where most classes are age-heterogeneous and taught jointly at different levels.

3. Key aspects of current reading didactics

Reading cannot be learned from one day to the next. The path from slowly deciphering individual letters all the way to fluently reading a whole book is long, often difficult and arduous. Most children and adolescents would want to be accompanied and supported repeatedly in this process. Important to this process are the adults, the parents and teachers who foster the children's often very different reading interests. They serve as role models who read to and discuss stories with the learners. This can and should begin long before children begin school: if the parents read and look at picture books and talk about them with their very small children or read stories to them and talk

about them, this represents a very early, particularly effective form of early reading promotion. According to the experience reports of adult readers, the most effective educational promotion of reading for young people are teachers who reveal themselves as readers, who take an interest in the students' reading materials and interests, who know many different books and can initiate and moderate inspiring discussions with the learners about the materials read.

To read well and with pleasure -both aspects are important preconditions for a successful reading development, and they are interdependent. Only those who have experienced the pleasure of texts and what they convey will want to undertake further, perhaps initially more laborious steps. Conversely, the students must have acquired certain skills in working with texts, pictures and contents, in order to engage themselves joyfully and inquisitively in further readings.

In doing so, the encouraging -furthering approach to teaching reading must keep an eye on various sub-areas. Those can be differentiated in three aspects: furthering of reading, reading training, and literary-cultural education. These three areas complement each other, but the required competences for them often cannot be practiced at the same time and with the same text. This applies, of course, particularly for native language education and reading in the native language. The individual sub-areas, however, can be taught and practiced with differentiated texts and assignments in a number of ways. This has a positive effect on the acquisition of literacy in the first language as well as in the language of the host country. The present text offers a rich collection of ideas and assignments for all three areas.

a) Reading promotion

The goal of reading promotion is to win over the students for reading. They should become curious about texts and books, should be able to choose among them according to their interests, they should experience the great variety of books and texts, and how exciting it can be to access their contents by reading. The ultimate objective would be that reading becomes a natural daily activity for the students - in school as well as at home - in the first language as well as in the language of the school.

In view of this goal, it is important to offer a broad and exciting selection of texts so that mostly all students can find readings of interest that they can delve into. A diverse selection in this sense should include not just books, but also magazines, newspapers, comics, photo and picture books, as well as a broad spectrum of electronic texts, ranging from a website with information about non-fiction topics, to a chat forum and e-books.

In dealing with students who possess little reading motivation, it may be necessary, at times, to explicitly demand the necessary silence for reading. Those children and youths must also learn to sit quietly at their desks in order to read their books and texts, and they must be accountable to themselves about what and how much they have read. This way a certain level of perseverance may be acquired and practiced which ensures that they not repeatedly abandon their chosen readings.

An educational approach that promotes and encourages reading also ensures that students recognize adult reference persons and same-age readers with whom they can discuss and exchange information and experiences with their readings. In mixed-age classes or groups, older students may serve as important role models.

Reading promotion pursues most of all the following objectives:

- It should first and foremost instill an interest in books and other media with writing and pictures.
- It should enable students' competent handling of large textual varieties and also provide pertinent learning assistance and strategies.
- It should open up all avenues to the world of writing and demonstrate that reading is an activity with everyday relevance and many relationships to one's own living environment (texts relating to personal interests, different media for the same topic, usage of texts from the first and second language, etc.). This way new readers can and should also be won and motivated.
- The promotion of reading should ultimately lead to an enjoyment of reading, so that children and youths not only read texts and books in school, but that reading and dealing with texts in their first and second language becomes part of their daily routine as a matter of course.

b) Reading practice

A good reading training aims at fluent and comprehensive reading through targeted practice. To be able to read well and fluently and to also comprehend what has been read is challenging. Many children and youths – particularly those from educationally disadvantaged families – tend to become overwhelmed if they are not supported with specific measures. Different practice formats at all class levels therefore are necessary for an encouraging reading environment. These exercises focus on the practice of basic reading skills, reading fluency (accuracy and routine) and reading strategies (assistance to help better understand difficult texts).

The training of reading is therefore not primarily guided by enthusiasm for reading. Its aim is rather a targeted practice to improve students' reading abilities. This occurs with structured skills practice, repeated reading exercises with the same text and with strategies, designed to help students better comprehend more challenging texts as well.

Reading didactics distinguishes between three central training areas. It goes without saying that these apply as well for reading practice in the first language:

1. Reading abilities

This area comprises primarily the rather technical aspects of reading on the level of the letter, word and sentence, where many students – particularly the younger ones – are not sufficiently competent. They experience problems with decoding, recognizing of graphemes and letters in their native language and linking of sentence parts and sentences. This applies particularly when the sign system and phonology of the native language is different from the school language (see above). To this end, HLT can offer effective support with a careful introduction into the writing system and the graphemes of students' native languages as well as with systematic vocabulary development and dealing with more complex syntactical structures.

2. Reading fluency

The training of reading fluency is – unfortunately - not yet fully anchored in educational practice, although it is of significant relevance. A learner who routinely reads relatively fast and without errors "gets through" a text and experiences correspondingly less difficulty in understanding its content. This is because practiced readers are able to concentrate more on understanding the text, as the more technical aspects of their reading process are largely automated. Readers with

weak fluency, on the other hand, must invest part of their energy for decoding and other technical aspects of the reading process. New results from Germany also show that students were able to construct a new and more stable self-concept in terms of their reading activities in the course of this reading fluency training. After completing this training phase, they felt more competent and characterized themselves more frequently as good and motivated readers. This in turn leads to a higher motivation for reading. It confirms a fundamental truism: Those who read well, like to read. Those who like to read, read a lot. Those who read a lot, read well.

3. Reading strategies

Good, well-practiced readers know what they can do in order to understand a text as quickly and fully as possible. They often apply different strategies (sometimes unknowingly) for textual interpretation and do not just read on, hoping for the best. For instance, they previously prepare a tentative reading plan and read the text according to this plan and their goals in different ways. In teaching methodology there are three different ways of reading and reading comprehension, which should be deliberately practiced in class – naturally also in HLT – based on appropriate texts:

- Targeted reading comprehension: this involves a targeted search for a certain information, i. e., in a dictionary or a phone book, in a timetable or in a non-fiction text.
- Global reading comprehension: the goal here is to understand the essence of a text, without necessarily storing every minor detail. This kind of reading is frequently used in connection with literary texts or newspaper articles.
- Detailed reading comprehension: is required when mostly every detail of a text must be understood (e.g. a recipe or instructions for a test, etc).

Practiced readers continuously verify the comprehension process during reading and know how to address any arising comprehension difficulties. A person's knowledge of reading strategies and their independent application represents a significant aspect of reading competence. The actual teaching of these strategies works best by jointly working through texts with the class, e.g. as part of an emerging classroom discussion. Following a careful introduction, these strategies naturally have to be practiced over and over again with different texts until they are internalized by the students. The approach and selection of strategies should vary, depending on the nature of the texts

and their content (e.g. strategies for understanding non-fiction, strategies for summarizing stories, strategies for understanding charts and graphs, etc.). Pertinent materials and suggestions can be found in the volume "Didactic materials 5: teaching of learning strategies and techniques in HLT", chapters 2 and 3 which offer additional strategies for reading and using educational resources (dictionaries, reference works, etc).

The present volume aims to present a broad range of practice exercises and examples in the areas of reading skills, reading fluency, and reading strategies which, of course, need to be adapted according to the requirements of a particular class or group. The weaker readers should practice as much as possible with the exercises in the area of reading abilities. Stronger readers may forego some or all of the reading skills exercises and use that time for their personal reading practice. It is particularly useful to practice reading fluency based on texts from everyday classes.

c) Literary-cultural education

Literary-cultural education intends to provide students with practical experience working on creative (literary) texts. This includes interacting with sensual and playful language in poems and language games or enjoying crafted literary texts. Of primary importance for HLT are, of course, native language texts and the age-appropriate teaching of a basic knowledge of one's own literary history. If upper level HLT classes draw comparisons between native language literature and the literatures of the host country and the world, their literary horizons is expanded.

The primary goal for students is to develop an aesthetic sensibility which will serve them well for continued experiences with poetically crafted texts. The culture of a country and people is largely reflected in texts and books, including traditional fairy tales and legends, as well as poems and stories or contemporary novels. All these genres comprise certain linguistic criteria in terms of content and form, which differ significantly from those of everyday or non-fiction texts. These differences can, of course, be developed with older students. The main emphasis, however, is not to analyze literary texts, but rather to get acquainted with the literature in the first place, to be able to read and enjoy it, and to become familiar with it over time.

Rhymes, verses and language rhythms, and also reading situations can already produce intensive, sensual-aesthetic listening experiences in very small children. Those who have experienced such listening experiences will continue to listen with their "inner ear" even later on when reading literature silently. This is of special importance when reading lyrical texts.

With the support of the teacher and with appropriate exercise assignments, the shared in class readings of creative language – e.g., a poem or a story – can be the basis not only for enjoyment but also for the understanding of a text on different levels. Gaps in comprehension may be closed through mutual exchanges, and awareness is raised and brought up for what is read between the lines. Pictures and scenes are collectively imagined and played (playing back is an excellent form of comprehension control and for deepening the understanding). The characters and acts of individual figures can be interpreted and discussed, and students may exchange their experiences of reading a literary text. The collective reflection, discussion and working through a text helps students to truly understand the meaning of a text. This approach is more promising and leads to more insights than a solitary contemplation of readings alone in a room.

4. Additional aspects specifically related to reading in the heritage language education classroom

Reading and reading promotion in HLT differs from reading education in the regular classroom primarily in terms of the language of the texts and their cultural provenience, as described above. The work and training areas are largely identical, as are the goals of literary socialization and promotion in the first and second language, however. Consequently, the following sections a) and b) are not just HLT-specific, but rather accentuate two general points (which are important for HLT as well).

a) Text relief before reading

Vocabulary carries a great deal of importance in reading. Readers often fail to understand a text because it comprises too many words which they don't know. This can lead to great problems, particularly with texts that are written in the standard version of the first language, because many children and adolescents speak the language at home exclusively in dialect.

For this reason, it is important that HLT instructors previously lighten the language burden of the texts and facilitate the access to them (see also Sträuli et al, pages 58 ff). A proven method is to discuss with the students a list of key words and potentially problematic words and phrases in order to clear up difficulties ("Look, we are going to read a text that contains words such as «masonry», «was situated», «creepy» and «knights' armor». We want to clear them up first!"). This allows students not only to tune into the text content; it facilitates activating their prior knowledge, formulating hypotheses, and they understand already a large part of the form and terms that appear in the

standard language text. Other things that facilitate comprehension are pictures that illustrate the events, show details, reflect moods or depict and explain specific content in pictures.

b) It is not necessary to always understand each and every word

Readers (and even teachers) often concentrate too much on what is not understood instead of concentrating first on that which has been understood. This deficit-oriented view can be demoralizing.

There is another solution: for instance, when students are asked to underline everything that they have understood when reading. By marking the passages where everything was immediately understood, they begin to realize that generally it was part of a sentence or a few words that they did not understand during the first reading. This tends to increase the motivation to continue reading. Moreover, with the context clues from what has been understood, the remaining comprehension problems can very often be solved.

With many texts, it is not at all necessary that the readers understand each and every word; depending on the educational goals and the type of text, a global understanding (see above) may be quite sufficient. The previous marking of key terms and central passages in the text may be helpful as well. This way, readers know what to pay attention to, and which parts are of special significance. Depending on the educational goals related to work with the text (e.g. a detailed analysis of the content and message), the readings must be followed up with enhanced vocabulary practice. That working with vocabulary in the context of real texts is particularly authentic should be obvious.

c) Cooperation with regular classroom education

When HLT and regular classroom instruction work together, this cooperation widens the horizon and deepens the sustainability of what has been learned. This pertains not just to content that was treated jointly (e.g. water or agriculture in the various countries), but includes also many learning techniques and strategies. Since these are almost always supra-linguistic, i.e. they can be applied in different languages, a cooperation between HLT and regular classroom instructors in this area is particularly valuable. This is equally true for the important area of literary-cultural education, where HLT and regular classroom instruction complement each other optimally and could jointly promote the joy of reading.

In places where institutional contacts between HLT and regular classroom instruction are not automatic as, for instance, in Sweden, it is sometimes up to the HLT instructors to initiate contact and to inform themselves about the possibilities of cooperating in the