

Reading education in Lithuania and the functioning of school libraries and the public library in Alytus.

Organized by Lithuanian partners from 8-12.11.2021, the training in Alytus was held as the third, even though it was planned as the first, but "Mr. Covid" caused it to have to be otherwise. The actual training was held at the historic Kurnenai School near Alytus (Oita), which was founded in 1936 on the initiative and with money of an American engineer of Lithuanian origin Lauryns Radziukyns. Much of the building materials - windows, doors, school benches, boards, parquet flooring, radiators, sanitary equipment - were brought from the United States at the time. The school operated from 1936 to 2008. Between 2014 and 2020 it was renovated with the help of EU funds. Currently it serves as an art, cultural and educational center. It is taken care of by the Alytus regional government.



Dawna szkoła, Kurnėnai, rejon olicki, Litwa, Autor [Vilensija](#), Licencja [CC BY-SA 3.0](#). Stan przed remontem.

Locating the training, which was attended by people from many communities outside the buildings of partners' schools full of children, was also necessitated by the rules of conduct recommended in the Covid pandemic. Participants in the training entered the schools, and in fact the partners' libraries, only after the lesson was over, when no children were present.

The training in Alytus, in addition to reading education and library operations, included a module related to digital competence according to DIGCOMP. This module was a continuation of the training in Gizycko.

First day of training, Monday, 2021-11-08

The training began with an IT teacher at the Alytus Vocational Training Center (Alytaus profesinio rengimo centras - APRC), Mr. Kęstutis Viselga, presenting the topic "Digital infrastructure for Lithuanian schools: IT capabilities and implementation."

Then Ms. Nijolė Amšiejienė presented the topic "Strategies for Creative Reading" on the use of reading cards in training reading skills. The presenter shared her experience and the usefulness of cards in reading development and reading comprehension. Presentations by these lecturers and others can be found in Open Educational Resources.

After a lunch break, they went to the APRC library, where the participants learned about the interesting architecture, the various library complexes, collections and activities. Ms. Vijoleta Vaitulevičienė, who works there, played the role of guide.



Ms. Vijoleta Vaitulevičienė, at the APRC library, presents the trainees with an exhibition of novelties purchased with EU funds. The photograph shows the space available to the library. Such space, which allows for full operations, is unavailable in Gizycko facilities without new infrastructure investments..

Second day of training, Tuesday 2021-11-09

The training on the second day began with a module on digital competence. Trainer Ms. Jurgita Kamandulienė introduced the participants to various tools that can be widely used in the learning process, especially in reading lessons (stories, dialogues, etc.) The presenter also showed the possibilities of the Teams platform, working in a hybrid way during the training.

She also presented digital tools (Edpuzzle, Padlet, Testmoz, Mindomo) use should improve not only students' computer skills, but also reading and writing skills

Ms. Eglė Linykienė, speaking as the second speaker of the day, presented Lithuania's National Reading Development Program for 2019-2024. The presenter also shared her experience on what she does to improve students' reading skills. She presented projects related to developing students' reading skills - "Swing of Children's Literature", "Time for a Book".

The third presentation, "Reading to a dog - a way to make friends with a book," aroused the most excitement, as a magnificent dog came to this presentation. Ms. Inesa Ežerskytė-Purenok (special educator, speech therapist, canine therapist) and Ms. Joana Grygutis (psychologist, canine therapist) presented how therapy with dogs can help develop the ability and desire to read.



A scene from the training.

The training on the day ended with a visit to the library of Dainavia Pro-Gymnasium School, where information was heard about the library's work, actions, exhibitions and the library's contribution to the development of students' reading. The meeting in the library was complemented by a visit to the relaxation room of Dainavia Pro-Gymnasium School, (an original idea of Director Edita) where the possibilities of the room were presented.

And outside the program, the trainees went to a modern pyramid in nearby Merkinė, where they had the opportunity to recharge their energy, necessary for further training and work (???).

Third day of training 10-11-2021 (Wednesday)

The first two hours were produced by Mr. Kęstutis Viselga discussing the dangers of the Internet. He concluded with a summary useful to any user of this medium:

- 1) Use antivirus software;
- 2) Keep your software up to date;
- 3) Watch out for e-mails of unknown origin with attachments;
- 4) Use firewalls;
- 5) Save a backup of important files;
- 6) Use strong passwords;
- 7) Encrypt important messages.

The second presentation, given by Ms. Danutė Venclovaitienė, Reading Strategy Cards, was about creative reading and its strategies. The presenter shared her experience and the methods she uses to encourage students to read.



A scene from a training course

The training on the day ended with a visit to the school library in Dzūkija, where Ms. Inga Diškevičienė presented the activities, the reading evenings she organizes, meetings with writers, exhibitions, etc., and also introduced the activities of the Dzūkija School Museum, and the course of its educational activities involving children in the reading process.

The fourth day of training 11-11-2021 (Thursday)

The training meeting was opened by Ms. Vilija Špokienė, presenting the possibilities of supporting the teaching of reading using various IT tools. The presenter not only talked about the applications she uses in her work, but also gave participants the opportunity to take part in a virtual discussion about what reading is for each participant. (The Poll Everywhere tool was used). Participants were also engaged in an open discussion about which tools help them develop their reading.

She presented several tools that can be used before, during and after reading a text.

The second presentation given by Mr. Justinas Vancevičius (head of the "Land of Children" program) by was interesting and informative. She introduced interesting children's books, authors, publishers and ongoing campaigns, events and fairs in Lithuania that engage children and their parents in reading. The lecture breathed optimism, according to the lecturer, there are writers, publishing houses and interesting books. According to Mr. Justinas in Lithuania, children's literature is now in its heyday.



Participants in the training in Alytus.

Traditionally, the last point of the training was a visit to a library, this time to the Jurgis Kunčinas Library in Alytus (the city's public library), where the head of the department presented the library's work, activities, exhibitions, campaigns, and of course was pleased to see the large number of visitors who are eager to read books and understand the benefits of doing so



Participants of the training at the Alytus City Library

The fifth day of training 2021-11-12 (Friday)

On Friday, the trainees visited the Martynas Mažvydas National Library in Vilnius. During the presentation of the institution, they learned about the events, meetings and reading actions organized at the library. They learned about the library's educational spaces, which are used when engaging children and their families in the reading process.

Teachers admit that the experience gained during the training is a valuable support in further work with children and young people.

Below is a photo gallery from a tour of the National Library of Lithuania, prepared by participants from Yelgava.



Description of the training on the basis of information by Ms. Silvi Balčiuvienė edited by Kazimierz Ambroziak