



Developing critical thinking among children and bibliotherapy in the library: an approach based on the traditional stories

Razvijanje kritičnega mišljenja pri otrocih in biblioterapija v knjižnici: pristop na podlagi tradicionalnih zgodb

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Abstract

Purpose: The paper aims to point out the possibilities of developing critical thinking in children by conducting bibliotherapy workshops in the library, based on the template of a traditional children's story. The work is based on a course, which the authors run at the Croatian Training Centre for Continuing Education of Librarians to encourage critical thinking in children, develop reading habits and create a critical reader. It is based on the workshops that were an integral part of the international project TRACE.

Approach/methodology: The paper presents the workshops the authors conducted as part of the Erasmus+ project Traditional children's stories for a common future – TRACE. The workshops are shared with the librarians through the Croatian Training Centre for Continuing Education of Librarians. We encourage children to think and create their own opinions using different methods, most of which are based on the modernized Socratic method.

Results: Children often do not get to express their opinions by questioning their attitudes. The conducted workshops showed how it is possible to use stories with different ethical themes to stimulate critical thinking in children and teach them how to be active participants in their society.

Practical use: Considering the possibility of using/combining several methods and conducting workshops in “continuations”, it is possible to apply them both in school libraries and children's departments of public libraries.

Originality and value: The paper points to the importance of developing critical thinking in children and highlights the value of traditional stories that influence children's awareness of their personality and shaping of their attitudes, contributing to the ability to solve life's problems and the development of a value system and the improvement of interpersonal relationships.

Keywords: critical thinking, traditional stories, methods, bibliotherapy in the library

Izvleček

Namen: Prispevek želi poudariti možnosti kritičnega mišljenja pri otrocih z izvajanjem biblioterapevtskih delavnic v knjižnici, ki za osnovo uporabljajo tradicionalne otroške zgodbe. Delo temelji na tečaju, ki ga avtorici izvajata na hrvaškem Centru za permanentno strokovno usposabljanje knjižničarjev z namenom spodbujanja kritičnega mišljenja otrok, razvoja bralnih navad in oblikovanja kritičnih bralcev. Temelji na delavnicah, ki so bile integralni del mednarodnega projekta TRACE.

Pristop/metodologija: Prispevek predstavlja delavnice, ki sta jih avtorici izvajali v okviru Erasmus+ projekta Traditional children's stories for a common future – TRACE. Preko Centra za permanentno strokovno usposabljanje knjižničarjev sta jih predstavili knjižničarjem v celotni državi. V njih z uporabo različnih metod spodbujamo otroke h kritičnemu mišljenju in oblikovanju lastnega mnenja. Večina metod temelji na posodobljeni Sokratovi metodiki.

Rezultati: Otroci pogosto nimajo priložnosti izraziti svojega mnenja skozi izpraševanje svojih odnosov. Delavnice so prikazale, kako je mogoče uporabiti zgodbe z različnimi etičnimi temami za spodbujanje kritičnega mišljenja otrok in učenja aktivnega sodelovanja v skupnosti.

Uporabnost: Glede na možnost uporabe/kombiniranja več metod in izvajanja delavnic v nadaljevanjih, je mogoča uporaba tako v šolskih knjižnicah kot tudi otroških oddelkih splošnih knjižnic.

Originalnost/vrednost: Prispevek prikaže pomembnost razvoja kritičnega mišljenja otrok in poudari vrednost tradicionalnih zgodb, ki vplivajo na otroško zavedanje njihove osebnosti ter oblikovanje odnosov, kar prispeva k zmožnosti reševanja življenjskih težav in razvoju vrednotnega sistema ter izboljšanju medosebnih odnosov.

Ključne besede: kritično mišljenje, tradicionalne zgodbe, metode, biblioterapija v knjižnici

1 Introduction

1.1 About TRACE project

In the period from September 1, 2018, to July 31, 2021, the National and University Library in Zagreb implemented a project called Traditional Children's Stories for

a Common Future – TRACE¹ as part of the Erasmus+ program under Key Activities 2 (KA2), Cooperation for Innovations and exchange of good practice for the activity Strategic partnerships in the field of education. The project's coordinator was the National and University Library in Zagreb, with partners from Croatia, Greece, Latvia, and Spain.

The TRACE project was intended for children aged six to twelve, their teachers, librarians, parents, and the general public to develop critical thinking in children using traditional children's stories from partner countries. By familiarizing themselves with the children's literature of European countries in an innovative way, the children were encouraged to read, and at the same time, they learned about the culture of those countries through workshops.

The project contributed to the following areas: raising awareness of the importance of Europe's cultural heritage through education and life-long learning, supporting skills development and social inclusion. Children were motivated and habituated to critical thinking, to read and understand literature/writings from their early age. Through new and innovative educational methods, we developed learning materials and tools, as well as actions, that support the effective use of Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs) in education and training. In today's diverse society, social and civic competences help participate in social and working life in an effective and constructive way. The new way of life forces us to provide the children with a new kind of education that consists of researching, thinking, and making conclusions, with the goal of creating one's own thinking and ideas, developing an understanding of oneself and of the society we live in, as well as finding one's life orientation and ethical values.

Formal and non-formal educational institutions and libraries in each partner's country were included (primary school teachers and librarians, who were working together during the entire project implementation). In total, 45 workshops were conducted during the project with the participation of 707 children and 35 teachers and librarians. Through the implementation of the project, piloting of the materials, and events organised during the project dissemination, about 1500 children, their teachers and librarians, stakeholders and general public were reached.

Short-term learning, teaching, or training activities were organized for the staff, who were involved in this project. During the Joint Staff training Event, with

¹ More about the TRACE project is available at: <http://www.trace-portal.eu/>

participation of the representatives of all partner's organizations and associated institutions, the participants were trained how to use all parts of IO1 – TRACE Educational Package, and how to implement the methods used in the workshops in formal and non-formal education. The workshops provide hands-on learning methods and materials that are easily applied in classrooms and libraries, while on the other hand the Guidelines provide deeper explanation of these methods, along with the definition of traditional children story and value education.²

The project has resulted in two intellectual outputs: the first is TRACE educational package, that consists of educational learning and teaching materials, stories, and workshops; and the second is TRACE E-platform which contains all educational materials, created as part of the project in open access.

Considering the activities and mission of the National and University Library in Zagreb, as the central library of the Croatian library system in the development of knowledge, free access to information, preservation of Croatian cultural heritage and encouragement of lifelong education, the results of the project has achieved a large part of the planned tasks in practice through cooperation established at the national and international levels, and by promoting the European values of multilingualism and multiculturalism.

1.2 Bibliotherapy workshop course

The main aim of this paper is to interpret the course that the authors have been running at the Croatian Training Centre for Continuing Education of Librarians. Below, the paper will detail the method of carrying out the workshops, based on the template of a traditional children's story with a special emphasis on bibliotherapy, with the aim to point out the possibilities of developing children's critical thinking by conducting bibliotherapy workshops in the library.

The workshops, described here, were conducted by the National and University Library in Zagreb in cooperation with the Zagreb City Libraries, specifically the Selčina Library, a branch of the Sesvete Library. It is based on the workshops created during the TRACE project. Its primary goal is to develop children's critical thinking and socioemotional abilities, encouraging reading and developing reading skills, which means reading with understanding and which creates a better reader, a critical reader, a person, who reflects and expresses his views and attitudes (Peti-Stantić, 2019). One of the goals is to strengthen children's

² Examples of workshops are available at: <http://www.trace-portal.eu/index.php/download-zone/>

competencies, based on the European reference framework of key competencies (Europski referentni okvir ključnih kompetencija, n. d.). Literacy competence is undoubtedly the most important one, including language, personal and social competence and learning competence, civic competence, cultural awareness and competence of expression and digital competence.

As an introduction to the bibliotherapy workshop, the next chapter will briefly present the most important representatives of critical thinking and the meaning of the traditional story.

2 Critical thinking and traditional stories

2.1 Critical thinking

What is critical thinking? The word *criticism* originates from the Greek word *kri-
no*, which means to judge, discern, choose, and *critical thinking* comes from the Greek word *χριτική τέχνη* (kritiki techni), which means the art of evaluating and thinking. It is important to note that criticism does not necessarily have a negative meaning. According to the Croatian encyclopedia (Kritika, 2021), it means “judging the positive and negative sides of a phenomenon, act, idea, researching principles, facts, etc., to make rigorous aesthetic or philosophical judgments about them; ...” The partners in the TRACE project defined critical thinking as something which passes understanding. It includes systems thinking (analytical and synthetic thinking) and a depth of knowledge that goes beyond the subject itself and extends outward. It requires problem-solving, creativity, rationalization, evaluation, and a desire to shed light on all aspects of a topic.

As a basis for those interested in a more detailed study of the concepts and definitions of critical thinking, we will list several prominent authors who deal with this field. Lipman (2003), the most famous contemporary theorist of critical thinking as an educational phenomenon, lists more than 30 definitions of critical thinking. Lipman defines critical thinking, also called reflexive thinking, as a judgment process based on the quality evaluation of alternatives regarding available arguments (Buchberger, Bolčević and Kovač, 2017). Apart from Lipman, the most famous contemporary authors who contributed to developing the concept of critical thinking are Dewey and Ennis. Dewey, also considered the father of modern critical thinking, defined critical thinking as an active, persistent and careful consideration of beliefs or assumed forms of knowledge in the light of the foundations (reasons) that support them and the further conclusions they lead to. Ennis believes that critical thinking is logical, reflective thinking

focused on deciding what to think and what to do (Buchberger, Bolčević and Kovač, 2017). According to Paul and Elder (2004), critical thinking consists of eight elements of thinking: purpose, problem question, assumptions, viewpoint, information, concepts, interpretation and conclusion, and implications and consequences.

The theory and practice of critical thinking emphasize its role in the educational process, and the importance it has for the development of psychosocial skills in children to create their own opinions and ideas, navigate the society we live in, and find direction and ethical values in life. Ćurko et al. (2015) believe that critical thinking is “an approach that develops critical thinking skills in children and creates the foundation for developing many other skills and competencies. Critical thinking is based on reason, which means it is guided appropriately utilizing good reason in contrast to, for example, ignorant desires and tendencies, prejudice, fears, rewards and fear of punishment, etc. It is reflective thinking, which deals with problems such as what to believe or what to do (cognitive and practical aspect)”. Buchberger (2012) states that critical thinking is a complex process resulting from analyzing and evaluating claims, finding justifications for claims, comparing them with other and/or opposing claims, generating objections to claims, and finally taking a position. Critical thinking is additionally determined by developing competence, i.e. skill.

2.2 Traditional stories

Why were traditional children’s stories chosen for the development of critical thinking? Primarily because traditional folk stories are part of the oral and written traditions of all world cultures. They are based on the culture, traditional values and folk customs of the people, country, or region. They are told and retold from generation to generation and have become common knowledge. They were passed down from one storyteller to another before being written down in a book. These are stories that children listen to from a young age, and they easily understand and accept them. At the same time, by introducing children to traditional folk tales, we preserve and pass on to young generations the rich cultural and literary heritage of our own and other nations, depending on where the story originates (Ćurko et al., 2021).

Almost all traditional children’s stories have a moral lesson, and it can be used for developing thinking in children. With the right educational method, every traditional children’s story can become a modern thinking story. In the Guidelines, some methods of this kind can be found, such as: Community of inquiry, Socratic dialogue, Stories and biographical learning and Nelson dialogue.

In all cultures, the name traditional children's story implies a fairy tale, legend, or myth. It contains elements of local fairy tales, myths, legends, and oral stories and includes oral and written stories, pictures, chants, and songs. As with a fairy tale, all definitions have some elements in common. A fairy tale is usually aimed towards children. They have magical characters such as wizards, witches, dragons, fairies, giants, supernatural beings, or objects, etc., a combination of reality and magic. The Croatian encyclopedia interprets the meaning of the fairy tale as a derivative of the word *bayati*, which means to say, talk, speak (Bajka, 2021). A legend is usually defined as a story originally about a saint, and today legends tell about things that could be realistic and are similar in content to folklore. The meaning of word myth originates from the Greek word *μῦθος* (*mitos*), which means word, speech, ie., fable, story. A myth is a classic story usually focused on one hero or event and explained the mysteries of nature, existence, or the universe without a factual basis in facts (Ćurko et al., 2021).

Traditional stories, especially fairy tales, are an essential part of every child's life because they teach children about life, moral values, and the choices we face in life. Their goal is to educate, teach and entertain children by imparting values, attitudes, and information necessary to develop skills that enable children to live harmoniously in society or culture. The most common ethical themes in traditional stories for children are community, responsibility, peace, hope, justice, a sense of equality and meritocracy, dignity and respect, solidarity, tolerance, and appreciation of moral values. Stories are also a motivational tool for language learning and learning in general. Children learn and develop language skills by listening to stories and talking to the storyteller. By listening and reading stories, children learn to understand speech and larger thematic units, which contributes to the development of attention, enriches vocabulary, and improves communication skills (Ćurko et al., 2021). The story affects the cognitive (knowledge, memory, attention, creativity, imagination), social (governance, behaviour) and affective abilities (feelings of love, empathy, curiosity, etc.) of children (Velički, 2013).

3 Workshops for children and teachers/librarians and the applied methods

3.1 Workshops

One of the activities in the TRACE project, which were planned in the project proposal, were workshops with children, their teachers, and librarians, based on selected stories. For this purpose, the partners agreed on the methodology to be used at the workshops, and the choice of a particular method depended on

the age of the children for whom the story is intended. Based on the given story, each partner chose the method to use in the workshop.

The National and University Library in Zagreb held workshops in cooperation with the Zagreb City Libraries, in the Selćina Library, with children and teachers from Luka Elementary School, Sesvete Elementary School and Retkovec Elementary School (City of Zagreb). In total, 166 participants were involved. They came to the library in an organized manner to attend the workshops. The pupils from second to sixth grade were included. Also, children were coming to the library, accompanied by their parents, during their free time. Based on the template of a traditional children's story, using guided reading, we encouraged children to think about the actions of the characters from the story, but also to connect the events from the story with their personal life situations.

Considering the positive response, and the expressed interest of the children, their teachers and librarians, the authors decided to share their experiences with the broader social community and, based on these bibliotherapy workshops, to start a course at the Croatian Training Centre for Continuing Education of Librarians. The workshops provide an insight into the possibilities of working with children to develop critical thinking and strengthen their social and emotional competencies and can be easily adapted, depending on whether they are held in children's departments of public libraries, as places of personal development for the youngest users, or in school libraries and classrooms.

3.2 Methods

The methods used during the project are explained in detail in the Guidelines for Teachers and Librarians (Ćurko et al., 2021). The Socratic method, "teaching by questioning instead of communicating," is named after the Greek philosopher Socrates (469-399 BC). Contemporary trends and programs, aimed at teaching children to think and develop critical thinking, include a modernized version of the Socratic dialogue, a dialogue containing the Socratic method of asking questions and answering. In short, the method means "to question everything", but is based on solid arguments. The method can be adapted to age, and the most crucial question of the method is "Why?" Nelson's method, or Nelson's dialogue, is named after the German philosopher Leonard Nelson who developed the Socratic method for dialogic philosophizing in groups. According to Nelson, the Socratic method involves practising independent thinking through a dialogue. The method of stories and biographical learning is based on the child's experience and the participant's experience. This experience is a starting point for discussion, reflection, and dialogue.

The methods most often used in libraries are storytelling, interpretive reading and listening, or guided storytelling with subsequent artistic expression such as creative writing, artistic expression, puppet improvisations, process drama, etc. All these methods or their combinations were used in the workshops within the project, depending on the story being discussed, the age of the children and the time available.

4 Bibliotherapy in the library

4.1 Developmental bibliotherapy

Developmental bibliotherapy is aimed at working with people growing up. It helps in understanding oneself, and the complexity of family, interpersonal and social relationships, and as such it certainly has a place in the library, both school and public (Krpan et al., 2018). In libraries, numerous programs to encourage reading are organized and implemented, during which the coordinator of the workshops, usually using the method of guided reading, introduces readers to the story itself (Sabljak, 2022). During the bibliotherapy workshop, guided reading is often supplemented with play, dialogue, dramatization, and various forms of creative expression to encourage interaction between the read text and the workshop participants. At the beginning of the workshop, it is advisable to check the mood of its participants, provided that the leader is familiar with the group. The mood is tested using a scale from 1 to 10 in the positive and negative direction from zero, and the children have the task of rounding the number of their current moods. At the end of the workshop, the measurement can be repeated to gain insight into the effect of the workshop on each child's current condition. With an unknown group, starting with the introduction game is mandatory, followed by everything else. During the introduction game, the workshop coordinators first introduce themselves by full names and, in their own opinion, state their most pronounced (positive) characteristic. Then each workshop participant introduces themselves to the group in the same way. A ball can be added to the game, which they pass to each other (after getting to know each other) and at the same time, they should say the name of the person they throw the ball to (to remember each other's names). The game achieves the group's connection, which results in its stability. Otherwise, it can disintegrate and can not function. From the multitude of games (which can be found in various literature, eg. in the book Children's Games for the Development of Social Skills (Plummer, 2010)), we always choose the one that will fit the content of the story, the workshop is based on. When choosing the story on which the workshop will be based, care should be taken that it corresponds to the reading abilities of the group and the

set goals, ie. what the workshop coordinator plans to explore through the story and what to work on with the workshop participants. At the same time, it is essential to have characters in the story that enable identification. In this way, during the workshop, an internal balance is established throughout each part of the story, so that the reader's participation during the story does not disappear or stray. The course of the workshop must go in the direction outlined by the workshop leader to have a positive effect of reading on the reader, who manages to identify with the character from the story. For this reason, when choosing a story for bibliotherapy, it is more important that it solves a problem and gives readers hope in the possibility of solving their similar life problems. Guided reading aims to encourage critical thinking among the workshop participants. This can be achieved with questions that should be reflective in nature to encourage the participants to think and take a stand.

It is necessary to encourage each participant to take part and interact according to the text, which is being read, but also with other workshop participants. After the guided reading of the story, workshop participants write down their reactions to the text they had read. Each written response is the participant's reflection on the story. By writing down their reactions (eg. what they liked and didn't like about the story and why, what kind of feelings each character's action awoke in them, etc.), they begin to think deeply about the text and incorporate what they read into their initial thoughts or beliefs. The story can also serve as a template for changing one's perception of a particular situation (Bandler, 1981). The workshop can be supplemented with creative techniques – artistic, literary, dramatic. In this way, it can influence the development of cognitive, emotional, and social skills, necessary for children's lives.

4.2 An example of a bibliotherapy workshop

The workshop uses the Latvian story *Grateful Creatures* as a literary template. The workshop coordinator in the library is the children's librarian. It is conducted in groups of 10 to 15 participants arranged in a circle. The workshop lasts 120 minutes but it can be held in several sessions, if more demanding activities are planned. The primary activities, that are carried out, are literary, written, artistic and dramatic expression. The materials needed for the workshop are an emometer (a scale to determine the mood of the participants), a ball (a familiarization game), the text of the story *Grateful Creatures*, and writing, drawing, or painting utensils. The workshop aims to strengthen cooperation, tolerance and empathy among participants and overcome the feeling of inferiority caused by humiliation within the group.

The course of the workshop:

After the introductory game, the children are divided into groups according to the colour they belong to (each child gets a circle of one of the four colours on their forehead), and one child remains unassigned because of the colour which does not belong to any group. Upon a coordinator's request, the unassigned child joins a group of choice. It is to be expected that the group will accept him, but this only happens sometimes. During this game we can learn about the children's social skills (tolerance and empathy), because only an empathetic child will accept someone, who doesn't belong anywhere. This is followed by a guided reading of the story. After the librarian reads the title of the story, they ask questions (eg., What do you think this story is about? What does it mean when someone is grateful? Are you thankful? Why are you grateful for? Can someone be grateful to you and why do you think so?). This encourages the child's interest, and personal connection with the story, develops imagination and verbal expression (the so-called evocation phase, in which each participant should be encouraged to participate in expressing their own opinion). Then it continues with the interpretive reading of the story while pausing at exciting parts of the story and asking additional questions that stimulate thinking. That is the so-called phase of understanding the meaning, when the children encounter a new idea from the content of the story. It is essential to ask questions that stimulate thinking and connect the story's content with the children's daily life. Every participant must have the opportunity to express their opinion and actively participate. This is how connections are made between known knowledge and new one and, consequently, how understanding is established. After the guided reading, the story's content relates to the activities in the continuation of the workshop (the so-called reflection phase). Children write down their reactions to the text that had been read, for which they should be given time to think and thus fit what they read into what they already thought or believed. Then follows a reenactment of the story by choosing one child, who will be the main character from the story, and placing him/her on the so-called "hot seat" in the middle of the group. The group is arranged in a circle. The librarian asks the first question to help children learn to explore the feelings and thoughts of a particular character. That is the reason why children answer the questions in the first person. All participants take turns asking questions. Children ask open-ended reflective questions that lead them to think about and take a stand on the story's events. Children are expected to examine the characters and their motivations and connect their thoughts with emotions and actions. In this way, they can connect the relationship between the story and their own experiences, thus creating a connection between the story's content and their' real life. Here is an example of the child's question to the main character, i.e. the one sitting in the middle of the group in the role of the main character: *"Why do your brothers call you stupid?"* A child, who answers questions in the role of a given character, comes into contact with himself and

indirectly expresses his inner state and makes decisions. One of the possible answers to the question may be: *"I don't know everything they know because they are older than me."*

In the continuation of the workshop, children can come up with different creative techniques, chosen by the librarian, to come up with other solutions to the problem from the story. It can be achieved by creating comic books, literary composition, and dramatic or puppet improvisation. Creative techniques, after reading, make it possible to express one's personal view of a problem and a problematic situation indirectly, and to find a solution. The described bibliotherapy workshop is a template based on which it is possible to improvise with children, depending on the topic that we want to work on with them (the story is chosen in relation to the topic). Depending on the age of the children, during guided reading we ask them questions through three phases: phase of evocation, i.e. prediction of events in the story, phase of understanding what is happening, and finally phase of reflection, i.e. personal reaction to the story that had been read. After reading the story, children write down their reactions to the text they had read in such a way that each reaction is a personal reflection to what was read (by no means it must not be a retelling of the text, but a personal reaction to the story, for example, what you liked or didn't like about it, what feelings and thoughts it evoked etc.). In this way, children are encouraged to think critically and connect the events of the story with their life situations, for example: *"I liked that justice prevailed in this story, and the fraudster brothers were punished. I'm glad that the father eventually realized that the son he humiliated was the best."* Or: *"It is not nice to humiliate or insult anyone. They hurt me too when they say that my sister is better than me in everything."* (4th grade elementary school students).

Responding to reading is part of the reading process by which readers begin to think deeply. That's why we need to give them time to react on what had been read in order to incorporate it into what they already thought or believed.

5 Conclusion

In whole, the TRACE project achieved all the set goals and reached numerous users through the implementation of the project, piloting of the materials and events, which were organised during the project dissemination (about 1500 children, their teachers and librarians, stakeholders, and general public). Using traditional stories from the partner countries, combining different methods, the participants adopted the habits of critical thinking, reading, and understanding literature/writing from an early age. With the right educational method, every

traditional children's story can become a modern thinking story. The project contributed to raising awareness of the importance of Europe's cultural heritage through education and life-long learning, supporting skills development and social inclusion.

Two intellectual outputs were produced. The TRACE educational package consists of educational learning and teaching materials which includes 21 stories from partner countries, story-based critical thinking workshops, and a Guidelines for Teachers and Librarians with the methodology used during the project. The TRACE E-platform contains all educational materials created as part of the project in open access, over 400 units (stories for children in five European languages, parallel display of stories in the original language with English translation, examples of workshops, Guidelines for Teachers and Librarians, metadata description of digitized stories, gallery of children's works, video works, e-book of selected children's stories).

During the project 45 workshops with participation of 707 children and 35 teachers and librarians were conducted to familiarize them with different creative methods of encouraging children to read, think critically and explore European culture and European countries through traditional children's stories. The results from the piloting workshops, held in participant countries (Croatia, Spain, Greece, Latvia), revealed that in terms of methodology, activities, and material the workshops were highly appreciated both from facilitators and children.³

The workshops, which were described above, were conducted by the National and University Library in Zagreb in cooperation with the Zagreb City Libraries, specifically the Selčina Library (a branch of the Sesvete Library). Of the various methods of encouraging and developing critical thinking in children, bibliotherapy in the library was most often used in the Selčina Library. Bibliotherapy, as an elaborate program of guided reading, supplemented with creative techniques (different ways of communication), encourages children to think critically by expressing their own opinions and attitudes while developing children's social and emotional abilities. This program of targeted guided reading of selected traditional stories develops reading skills and prerequisites for the reader's active reflection on the text they had read. It is about creative reading, which, by processing the text, develops the acceptance of positive human values and leads to the interaction of the reader and the story, including a game as an introduction to reading or as preparation, but also as a supplement to complete experience

³ Evaluation of piloting workshops provided by the project is available at: <https://erasmus-plus.ec.europa.eu/projects/search/details/2018-1-HR01-KA201-047483>

of the story. Bibliotherapy is based on the emotions evoked by reading that lead to identification with a character who has a similar problem as the reader, but also includes the reader's thinking, whereby the reader brings all his previous knowledge into the text and, in doing so, analyses, criticizes, accepts, or rejects what was read. In this way, by reading traditional stories, children expand their knowledge and develop the social skills and emotional intelligence, necessary for life. Children love stories, play and creativity. Based on the evaluation of piloting of the workshops, they appeared to enjoy very much their participation at the workshop, they liked the activities as well as the material provided. They mostly enjoyed listening to the narration of the story, drawing, painting, and acting. This is a sign that children's bibliotherapy should be carried out with children using different high-quality stories that can encourage them to think critically, identify with the characters, and in this way work through their own life situations and emotions. Developing emotional literacy (recognizing one's own and other people's emotions) is necessary for personal stability and good interpersonal relationships. Bibliotherapy workshops, conducted in libraries with children and young people, can improve their communication skills, social competence, and develop empathy by using quality literature and a lot of activities, full of play and creativity. Such activities are the ticket to the children's world from which the child can be properly guided, which requires the involvement of adults (librarians or teachers), who, in addition to knowledge of children's literature, also recognize the needs of children.

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