

School Library. Keep Exploring. Selected reading promotion activities for grade 1 – 6, based on the “sba-Curriculum”

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The „sba-Curriculum“ is a loose-leaf edition of educational library objectives for students grades 1 – 10 as well as a collection of full descriptions of activities matching the respective grades and objectives. Here – for the IASL 2009 conference in Abano Terme (Padua, Italy) – reading promotion activities for grades 1 – 6 take centre stage, following a holistic view of reading promotion and covering a multitude of different approaches.

Reading promotion activities, library skills, library spiral curriculum

1. Introduction

In Frankfurt on the Main / Germany all public schools and their school libraries may benefit from a wide range of services provided by Frankfurt School Library Division (sba)¹. Sba-services encompass three key aspects:

- Library and media services for the school library network (Status May 2009: 73 school libraries, with upward trend)
- Advice, further education and training programmes for teachers, librarians, and volunteers. This block is aimed at all 165 schools in Frankfurt.
- Media and reading promotion services, including lendable media kits, quizzes and polls, best practice transfer via print or online resources, and so on. These services also target all 165 schools.

¹ For more details on Frankfurt School Library Division, please see: Jordan-Bonin, Eva von: sba Frankfurt/Main. A Competence Center for School Libraries. Innovative and efficient support in close cooperation with librarians, teachers, and volunteers. IASL (2009)

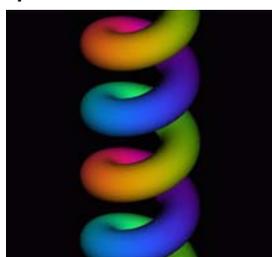
2. Starting Point and Background

Students need to be encouraged to use their library. Even a magnificently equipped and pleasantly designed library may end up neglected if students do not feel attracted to it on a regular and systematic basis.

In addition, as many of Frankfurt school libraries are not run by certified librarians or teacher librarians, but by either teachers with only a small or no reduction in their teaching load, or volunteers without library education, there is a need for easily transferable ideas.

With its “sba-Curriculum” Frankfurt School Library Division provides an answer to these challenges by describing both library objectives (for grades 1 – 10) and activities – meaning that the library activities are linked to each other to produce an ascending spiral so that each student comes into touch with the school library every so often while they attend school.

Spiral curriculum



A spiral curriculum (or tycoil curriculum) is generally understood as allowing students to revisit a subject matter’s content at the different levels of development of the subject matter being studied². This means that it builds upon and links to former experiences on a topic until the student has developed the full range of skills that go with studying the respective topic.

In recent years a number of German libraries – public libraries, school libraries and academic libraries – have taken up this pedagogical concept and devised library spiral curricula, usually in close cooperation between library and kindergarten, preschool and school staff. Here they focus on a range of library services – starting early in childhood, making offers repeatedly and consistently, thus spiralling up and raising students’ knowledge and know-how.

In most cases libraries and schools have set common objectives, such as the number of minimum library contacts per class and school year, and they have agreed upon teaching units for different age groups to be held in the library. A spiral curriculum is always based on a generally binding accord between library and school. It is never only a two-party affair between individuals in schools or libraries.

Sba-Curriculum



Both teachers and librarians pursue congruent goals, i. e. to enhance students’ reading and information skills. In addition, teachers seek to widen their teaching range by using libraries as interesting and multifunctional locations outside the classroom; librarians, on the other hand, are also interested in fostering library skills and in promoting library ties. The sba-Curriculum interlinks both professions’ interests, and whereas most library curricula published in Germany focus on the cooperation of public libraries and schools, the sba-Curriculum is an exclusively school library centred product. It is understood as a work in

² <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Curriculum>

progress and hence it is published as a loose-leaf binder allowing additional deliveries.

As regards content, it is split into a theoretical part devising library objectives, and a practical part with library activity recommendations. The School Library Division (sba) expressly welcomes all recipients to take ideas out of the sba-Curriculum and adapt them to their respective situations. The underlying idea of the curriculum being that it might be more a well of ideas than a step-by-step recipe: A set of options, that all schools adjoined to the sba may use to choose units and select objectives from, to implement them in their respective libraries, to their individual liking.

Asked for its advantages, both teachers and library staff (librarians, teachers, volunteers) answer that the sba-Curriculum is significantly conducive to strengthen the cooperation between “classroom and library”. What is more, they also mention that it serves as an intra-school public relation tool for library offers. From the teachers’ perspective the sba-Curriculum makes library offers and activities transparent by showing what may be done, taught and learned in the school library. From the library staff’s perspective it makes a contribution to an efficient and effective school library management. Neither objectives nor offers have to be re-discussed again and again. It spares them “re-inventing the wheel” by providing a collection of best practice modules. Aside from that it is a step to establish a binding library concept within the whole school community. It replaces individual and random cooperation by reliability and consistency.

3. The sba-Curriculum: Selected Library Objectives (Grades 1 – 6)

The first, theoretical part of the sba-Curriculum includes educational library objectives for students grades 1 – 10. These are largely along the lines of regular school curricula of the federal State of Hess³, national curriculum frameworks and national or international role models⁴. Here grades are regarded in pairs, i. e., grade 1 and 2, grade 3 and 4 etc.

Selected primary objectives for grade 1/2 to 5/6:

Grade	Main objectives
Grade 1 & 2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To develop interest in reading and foster reading motivation, e.g. to demonstrate a positive feeling about books, stories and reading • To support reading instruction and develop reading literacy, e.g. by talking about information found in library materials • To arouse interest in library use and develop library skills, e.g. to know where to find books on a pet subject. • To support the development of social, creative and cognitive skills, e.g. by participating in literary enrichment activities such as story time, draw and tell stories etc. • To improve language skills, e.g. to widen a student’s active and passive vocabulary

³ Frankfurt on the Main is situated in the State of Hess (in German, Hessen), one of 16 federal states in Germany.

⁴ For instance: Krähwinkel, Esther (2007). Informationskompetenz und Schulen. Frankfurt: Dt. Gesellschaft für Informationswissenschaft und Praxis

Grade 3 & 4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To maintain and widen reading interest and reading motivation, e.g. by creating a sense of achievement when reading • To foster reading skills and to start developing information skills, e.g. by starting to use indexes and tables of contents or by searching the OPAC (online catalogue) with assistance • To extend library interest and library skills, e.g. by getting to know the main sections of the school library classification • To foster the development of social, creative and cognitive skills, e.g. by presenting information found in the library verbally to a group and a teacher • To improve language skills, e.g. by participating in book-related staged plays
Grade 5 & 6	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To maintain reading motivation and to enhance reading skills, e.g. to know important authors of children's books • To enhance information skills, e.g. by using the OPAC independently • To maintain library motivation and to widen library skills, e.g. by learning to use a broad range of library materials • To support the development of social, creative and cognitive skills, e.g. by presenting information found in the school library independently and in different ways to a group • To improve language skills, e.g. mirroring texts that have been read by creative interaction

4. The sba-Curriculum: Selected Reading Promotion Activities and Library Units (Grades 1 – 6)

The second, practical part offers approximately 70 library units matching the respective grades and objectives. All these library units have been developed by qualified librarians in school libraries, and each has passed its acid test in the normal course of school life.

Here the School Library Division follows a holistic view on library learning, offering a playful and motivating start for students. All activities presented in the sba-Curriculum are clearly arranged and take into account students' diversity. They include different approaches – taking up students' joy of motion, their visual, artistic, or creative talents, their pleasure in competition or concentration etc. Hence their range varies from movement games, rallies and picture-puzzles to hands-on information skills or concentration exercises.

As reading promotion takes central stage in this paper, library units from the sba-Curriculum dealing with information literacy, OPAC use etc. are not given attention here, and instead, reading and book related activities will be expatiated on. The activities presented below are not structured grade-wise, but in due consideration of the different approaches offered for students:

- Motion

- Visual access
- Events
- Creativity
- Competitions
- Customer loyalty
- Reading promotion with parents
- Student participation
- Concentration

Motion, e. g. "Library Move Cube"

A library introduction with the so called Move Cube imparts basic library know-how and knowledge playfully and effortlessly.



Preparation:

The Move Cube is inflatable, and its six sides can be equipped with six coloured illustrations (photos, photocopies) of library related situations: Lending procedures, media formats, opening hours, library policy and behaviour, library activities, shelf arrangement etc.

Accomplishment:

Students gather in the library and the teacher/librarian throws the cube to the first student asking her/him to select one picture, to present this to the class and to describe what it might mean. After discussing the photo the first student throws the cube to a second student to explain her/his picture, and so on.

Questions asked by the teacher or librarian will guide the students and help them develop and discuss library skills.

Age-group:

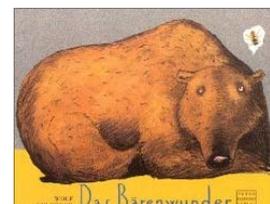
From six years on

Educational objectives:

To develop first library skills

Visual Access, e. g. "Guess that Book"⁵

This short library or classroom unit serves as an introduction to a reading-aloud session – with the aid of a guessing game on book covers.



Preparation:

⁵ From: Tatort Bibliothek. Wir kriegen sie alle! Ideen zur Förderung der Lesemotivation (2007) / edited by Susanne Krüger. Stuttgart: Institut für angewandte Kindermedienforschung, Hochschule der Medien

Choose a picture book to be read aloud and prepare a photocopy of one text page out of it. Here it is important that the text passage selected is related to the book cover. In addition, choose two picture books covering the same topic, e. g. bears.

Accomplishment:

Have your students gather in the library and present the covers of all three picture books. Students will discuss the covers and what stories might go along with them. Then read aloud the photocopied text passage, have your students guess the right book and continue your reading aloud session.

Age-group:

From four years on

Educational objective:

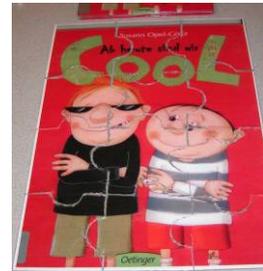
To develop reading motivation and to draw students' attention to the meaning of illustrations

Visual Access, e. g. "Picture Book Jigsaw Puzzle"

A first library reconnaissance going along with a reading aloud session.

Preparation:

Choose a picture book to be read aloud. Enlarge and photocopy its cover, glue the photocopy on a stiff cardboard and cut it into jigsaw pieces. Hide the pieces all over the library – between books in the shelves, in picture book troughs or comic boxes etc.



Accomplishment:

Before starting the reading session have your students search the library for all the missing pieces and let them complete the jigsaw puzzle, or rather book cover. Discuss the stories that may go along with this cover. Then start reading.

Age-group:

From four years on

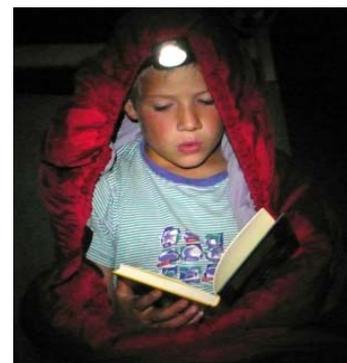
Educational objectives:

To develop reading motivation and to arouse awareness for the interplay of book cover illustrations and text

Events, e. g. School Library Sleepover

Reading together, exploring the library by night and sleeping there strengthens library motivation and makes reading a thrilling experience.

Preparation:



Prepare a programme for the evening with various activities. Get classroom teachers, school caretakers (for technical and logistic support) and parents (as volunteers) involved. In addition, all parents whose children will participate have to assent and should be asked to leave a telephone number, in case of emergencies.

Accomplishment:

Sleepover students play games, have a treasure hunt in the library or through the school, participate in reading aloud sessions, read on their own, eat together and get to sleep in the library.

Age-group:

From nine/ten years on

Educational objectives:

To develop reading and library motivation by offering students a thrilling library experience

Creativity, e. g. "Kamishibai Story Theatre"

Telling a story in theatre scenery particularly focuses student's attention on a reading aloud experience.



Preparation⁶:

Scan and print or photocopy the illustrations out of a picture book.

Accomplishment:

Tell the story by presenting the pictures sheet by sheet in the "Kamishibai theatre scenery". Afterwards invite students to re-draw the story for themselves and repeat the performance with their own pictures.

Age-group:

From six years on

Educational objectives:

To develop reading motivation and to arouse students' creativity by re-drawing and retelling the story

Creativity, e. g. School Library Bags

A school library bag supports students developing library routines and treating books carefully.

Preparation:

Have each student make her/his own library bag – with the



⁶ Suppliers of Kamishibai theatres: <http://www.kreashibai.de/>,
<http://www.theaterleeuwenhart.nl/duits/indexd.html>

student's name on it and decorated with favourite book heroes etc.

Accomplishment:

The library bag is used at each routine class visit in the library, especially for 1st or 2nd grade students.

Age-group:

From six years on

Educational objectives:

To develop first library skills

Creativity, e. g. "Library Helper"

The "Library Helper" supports students understanding that books in shelves are sorted and that each book has its particular place on the shelf.



Preparation:

Have each student make her/his own "Library Helper" – out of cardboard or ply wood and decorated or painted individually.

Accomplishment:

The "Library Helper" is used at each library visit, especially for 1st or 2nd grade students. When searching for books or media to borrow, students replace the book they want to look at with the "Library Helper" – thus memorising its place on the shelf.

Age-group:

From six years on

Educational objectives:

To develop first library skills

Competition, e. g. "Book Bingo"

A competition game to impart library and book related terms such as author, call number etc.



Preparation:

Playing Book Bingo with a class of 30 students, for instance, means to provide 15 different book titles – each book available twice. Then brainstorm app. 20 questions that deal with the books selected – such as "Whose book has an index?", "Whose book has 9 chapters?", or "Whose book has the call number xxx?" etc.

Accomplishment:

Before starting the game, explain – with the aid of some sample books – several book-related terms, such as author, editor, publisher, table of contents, chapter, index, call number. Write

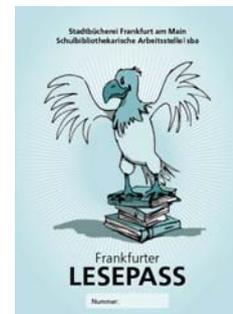
them on the blackboard, then distribute the books to the students and assign them to call out “Bingo”, as soon as they know the answer the questions you are going to ask. Each correct answer is awarded with one point, and in the end, the student with the most points will be “Bingo King”. For variety, have your students cooperate in dyads or divide your class in two groups and jot down points not for individuals, but for the respective group.

Age-group:
From 10 years on

Educational objectives:
To enhance reading skills and to practice the handling of books

“Customer Loyalty”, e. g. “Reading Passport” and “Reading File”

The underlying idea here is that routines such as using the Reading Passport (Primary Schools) or the Reading File (Secondary Schools) over a longer period of time will help students to develop “reading loyalty”.



Accomplishment:
In the Reading Passport students have their reading performance (minutes or pages) approved and documented – either by a parent or a teacher. In the Reading File students can also write down short reviews of all books and texts they have read.

Age-group:
Primary and secondary school classes

Educational objectives:
To practice reading routines and to enhance reading skills

Reading Promotion with Parents, e. g. “The Reading Ladder”

The Reading Ladder⁷ is a measuring rod for children aged zero to ten. According to the age of the child, the ladder gives basic information on how parents can encourage their child’s early literacy skills, what to read, when to visit the library, and how to use library services etc.

The Reading Ladder can be either distributed to all parents (for instance at a parent-teacher-conference) or displayed in the school library, in preschool group rooms etc.



Age-group:
0 to ten years

Educational objectives:
To support parents in their early literacy education and to raise awareness about reading

⁷ Developed by Brilon Public Library, for more details see <http://www.leselatte.de>

Student Participation, e. g. “Library Shopping Spree”

Allocating budgets to students to choose and buy library materials shifts library programmes away from the teacher or librarian centred focus to a more student centred focus.



Preparation:

The project always starts with a lesson unit on the difference between libraries and bookshops, about library collections, plus an overview of selection criteria and a short insight into the market of young adult literature, thus preparing students for their shopping spree and arousing their interest.

Then a special arrangement has to be made with a bookshop, ideally allowing a class visit outside their regular opening hours.

Accomplishment:

When visiting the book shop students select books and other media for their school library – within the budget allocated per student beforehand. Librarian or teacher jot down each purchase as every chosen book will be equipped with a label proudly announcing “recommended by ...” on the cover.

Last not least, students decorate a shelf to display their choice of new school library books in the library.

Age-group:

From 9/10 years on

Educational objectives:

To develop critical thinking skills, to foster library ties and to enhance students’ sense of responsibility

Concentration, e. g. “The Clothesline”

By rearranging sheets with book titles and sheets with book covers students learn about the context of title and illustration. An unusual approach demanding a high degree of concentration⁸.



Preparation:

Have book covers photocopied (ideally in colour) and book titles printed out. Hang both the sheets with covers and the sheets with the book titles on a clothesline in the library – mixed up, of course.

Accomplishment:

Have your students gather in front of the clothesline. One child at a time steps forward and hangs one title sheet alongside a cover appropriate in her or his opinion. Classmates do not comment and wait until it is their turn. Finally – after two or three rounds maximum – the librarian reveals what title really matches which cover.

⁸ Fritsche, Elfriede, Sulzenbacher, Gudrun (1999): Lese-Rezepte. Neues Lernen in der Bibliothek. Vienna

Age-group:
From 10 years on

Educational objectives:

To get to know the interplay of cover illustrations and book titles and to practice patience and mutual respect within the class

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Biographical Notes

Helga Hofmann is a graduate librarian with more than 20 years practice in various library settings – public libraries as well as school libraries. Since 2000 she has been working for Frankfurt City Library (Germany) as a team leader and as deputy head of the School Library Division (sba).

Currently she is also a member of the German nationwide panel of experts “Libraries and Schools” (German Library Association) and has gained experience as a library consultant for various non-governmental organisations at home and abroad.

Hanke Sühl is a graduate librarian and pedagogue with a wide variety of experience in school library work and in school library organization and development. Since 2004 she has been working for Frankfurt City Library (Germany) as a team leader in the School Library Division (sba). Currently she is also a member of Frankfurt City Library’s steering committee in charge of all reading promotion activities – in branch libraries as well as in school libraries. Additionally she has gained experiences as a library consultant for various non-governmental organisations at home and abroad.

Statement of Originality

This statement certifies that the paper above is based upon original research undertaken by the authors and that the paper was conceived and written by the author(s) alone and has not been published elsewhere. All information and ideas from others is referenced.