

Creating a Reading Culture: Children's Book Year in Kazakhstan Through the Prism of the Nazarbayev Intellectual Schools

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Introduction

The 2021 year was announced as “Year of Supporting Children and Youth Reading in Kazakhstan”. There was a press conference; the main topic of this meeting was to support and increase children’s and youth reading culture in Kazakhstan. “Today human development without books and libraries is impossible. Libraries around the world are the center of education and culture, the place of new ideas. Despite the rapid development of the electronic format, the educational role of the traditional library will never lose its significance,” said the President at this meeting. Especially in a pandemic, when the isolation and increasing dependence of children and adolescents sitting at home on the phone, the problem of the need for reading in society has become increasingly relevant. So, the 2021 year’s main goal was to develop this sphere of education and support children and youth in Kazakhstan. President urged all residents of the country to unite the efforts of all residents of the country in educating the reading generation, focusing on the status of libraries in this matter. It gave the start to most events which are provided now by libraries all around the country. 241 of these are for children, 11 are for youth, and the last six are for children and teenagers. All events are dedicated and held within the framework of the dedicated year. Today there are 258



children's and youth libraries in Kazakhstan. To continue such positive initiatives, it was decided to extend the “Year of Support for Children and Youth Reading” until 2023. This increased publishing high-quality and popular literature for children and adolescents. Also, Kazakhstan’s publisher’s houses are trying to translate and issue world bestsellers in Kazakh language. So, now children and teenagers have an opportunity to read “Harry Potter”, Roald Dahl’s, business psychology books etc.in their mother tongue.

The Objective of the Presentation

The objective of this presentation is – to show the work of Nazarbayev Intellectual School libraries. The main purposes are to develop and form new ways of work. Supporting the inoculation, reading values and educating the young generations of Kazakhstan.

In this article you can learn how the Nazarbayev Intellectual Schools libraries co-operate with other libraries of our country. Our main purpose is increasing the reading culture of our nation.

Nowadays libraries of NIS are supporting the government's program. NIS is a platform for piloting innovations in Kazakhstan’s formal education system and sharing experience. Fostering the development of multicultural, strong-minded students is a key idea of all Intellectual schools and the library certainly plays an important role in the formation and development of students. Supporting and developing student’s reading culture, inspiring a love of reading is a key focus area of Intellectual schools’ libraries. Libraries of Nazarbayev Intellectual Schools are constantly on the path of development and exploring new approaches. Modern requirements have introduced radical changes in the work of school libraries. Active learning and game methods have been effectively implemented into the Intellectual School library lessons. As a result of these dynamic lessons, the popularity of reading with our students has risen. Active methods of reading development allow students to feel that lessons are interesting and informative, combining teamwork, games, reflection.

This article presents the practical knowledge of Intellectual School librarians gained through such practices as the use of applied gaming methods to promote reading culture. Developing reading literacy and culture are one of the main functions of library activities. Programs for the development of book reading are implemented by involving all categories



of library users. Experience and information were also gained by holding innovative library activities, organizing projects to improve reading development and utilizing social media and other internet sites to promote learning and share the library's message. In order to implement these tasks, the following projects have been undertaken in Nazarbayev Intellectual Schools: "Booksrossing", "100 books recommended for reading by students at intellectual schools", D.E.A.R, READx, etc.

School library activities should not have limitations; the school library is a center for reading, creativity and intellectual development. By using new methods of work, constantly improving and maintaining a friendly atmosphere, the school library will be able to stay relevant to students. Additionally, the school librarian will act as a guide for students as they explore the worlds of reading, imagination and academic achievements.

Taking all this to attention, school libraries of Nazarbayev Intellectual schools always practice different methods and techniques to promote reading among the school community. The librarian creates opportunities for comprehensive, intellectual and spiritual development of a person by using modern information technologies. The libraries of the Nazarbayev Intellectual School are implementing the experience gained from schools in Singapore, the USA, Finland, and South Korea. By accumulating foreign experiences, the school library is working in a new direction.

Experience accumulation of advanced training courses in America, Singapore, France, Finland, international experts invited from Korea, Malaysia, Russia, as well as participation in IFLA, IASL international conferences made a huge contribution in developing the potential of school librarians.

After each course or seminars NIS librarians provide training seminars for colleagues from secondary schools sharing their experience. It made an enormous jump in the library system of our country.

The libraries of "Nazarbayev Intellectual Schools" are freed from working in the old tradition, are expanding their functional services, changing the image of a librarian, working in the direction of what a librarian should be and who he should be for a student and a teacher. The employees of our libraries are qualified instructional specialists in the information space using new technologies who have mastered high pedagogical and library

knowledge. Librarians are actively promoting trilingualism and the policy of academic integrity. Our employees have an international standard of education and today, thanks to the necessary knowledge and abilities, we are actively moving towards acquiring the status of teacher-librarians.

Active Methods of Developing Book Reading

Programs on the development of reading in NIS are carried out by involving all categories of library users, but the main focus is on promoting reading to teenagers. Development of students' book reading is a system of several projects and actions aimed at increasing the reader's competence, as well as forming critical thinking skills, informational and functional literacy, and reader activity.

The Main Tasks of Them Are:

- Acquaintance of students with the best books.
- Build relationships between readers, librarians, teachers, educators, curators, and students to discuss library issues.
- Exchange of opinions about events happening in the world of literature, about books read, what book and why you should read a book.
- Developing the importance of reading.
- Forming a harmonious and successful personality, following the example of famous people who have achieved great success in their field.

The tasks of the projects are to attract students to read the most interesting and best books, to create an association of people with a common idea who strive to develop book reading. The main book reading project in NIS schools is “**100 books recommended reading for the students of Nazarbayev Intellectual Schools**”. Most of the reading activities are organized in the framework of this project. For example: READx, Book Taste, Booktrailer, "Best reader", "Reading aloud", "Reading in the train", etc. Students participate in the organized event with great responsibility and interest.

During these events, students will prepare a stage performance based on the content of the work based on 100 books offered for reading and engage in various creative activities. For example, in the "Sweet books" contest organized to determine the "Best reader of the year", students bake a sweet cake based on the content of the books they read and defend a poster as a group. Plays are staged with the participation of book characters. The purpose of these contests is to increase cooperation among students, educate them in virtue, and increase their desire to read books.

On the eve of the Independence Day of the Republic of Kazakhstan, the "**Booksrossing**" project will be held in all intellectual schools. During the project, every student, teacher, school employee brings a book that they have read and want to share with others. Students write short essays, recommendations, opinions, wishes about the book for their contemporaries and decorate it all beautifully. A team of students, curators and librarians is then formed to deliver books to secondary schools or orphanages. During this event, schoolchildren talk about the books that have influenced their worldview, their achievement, and the fulfillment of their goals, and arouse the interest of other students in reading books. This project is a kind of connecting bridge. Participants of the action, especially students, have the opportunity to communicate with their peers, discuss their plans for the future and share their interests.

D.E.A.R. Project - «Drop everything and Read" is a daily 20-minute break where students and school staff drop everything and read their favorite book. The high performance D.E.A.R. program is a great way to get students into the habit of daily reading. "**Worksheet with photos, pictures or book illustrations**" method is also popular among our students. The aim of it is to develop students' critical thinking and mental activity through visual information.

Summary

This method is aimed at developing students' critical thinking and determining their level of understanding. Students read an article from a newspaper or magazine, identify the main idea and draw a conclusion. He conveys his main ideas in the form of a short analytical review

(summary) without repeating exact phrases. Summarizing allows students to express their opinions and evaluate what they have read.

The Book Conquers the World!

During the game, a large world map is hung (students can make their own), students write down the authors' works and find out on the map which country these authors are from. This game allows students to improve their geographical knowledge and to recognize world-famous authors of fiction.

Find the Book in Excerpts!

Game participants are given a title and hidden words for the title of the book. The game develops students' thinking ability, increases their interest in reading books and enables active use of library resources.

There are a huge amount of these kinds of activities. All these activities and methods are popular not among our students, even among parents. All these active methods are also implemented in each school of the country year by year. Most library workers and the school community of our country know these projects, methods and they implement them in their practice. It gives birth to different reading promotion projects. The main project which started in the country is "**The best reading school**" project. Within the framework of the project, the list of literary works will be implemented in 4 directions. That is, among them will be books of the best classics of the country, masterpieces of foreign world literature translated into the mother tongue, as well as books of modern poets and writers. Although the problems of teaching reading books in education are always important, the task of developing reading literacy is a new field for a modern school that implements the state educational standard of the Republic of Kazakhstan. Reading literacy is considered one of the most important indicators for preparing for life in modern society. Is academic culture necessary for students to successfully study real and natural sciences, vocational training and physical education, as well as other subjects? The answer is clear. Of course, yes. The key phrase "Study culture is a factor in the formation of self-improvement and self-education skills" is not in vain. Systematic and purposeful use of methodical methods in the development of learning contributes to the formation of the student's independent learning.

The process of formation of reader activity will be effective if modern effective technologies and teaching methods are used in the school. Development of reading activities of schoolchildren is one of the priority directions in the modernization of education in Kazakhstan. The contribution of the "The best reading school" project will be important in order to involve children and youth in learning activities as a means of spiritual and intellectual progress of the nation. Reading is a form of imparting and mastering knowledge and spiritual values; it is clear that personal education and education affects the success of a person in society and the general level of competitiveness.

Conclusions

It is time to change the traditional approach to the work of the school library and turn to innovation according to international standards. The libraries of Nazarbayev Intellectual Schools are constantly developing and researching. The demands of modern times brought many changes to the school libraries work. International practice shows that the high academic performance of students is directly related to the richness of the library fund, quality library staff, and the joint work of teachers and librarians to improve the teacher and educational process.

Libraries, i.e., librarians, play an important role in education, culture and society to eradicate illiteracy. Today, a librarian is not only a custodian of books and an expert in the needs of readers, but also a teacher, a teacher of information and functional literacy, a specialist in the field of digital technologies, a manager, and a marketer in the field of library-information, an instructor and a leading specialist in the world of information. Implementing new ways of developing reading has played a huge part in developing our libraries into a thriving and busy place. We work closely with our school administration, which runs and supports the program. Having a team involved with this really works and benefits the students academically. The reading ages of our learners have improved significantly. Organizing and involving students in interactive activities creates a real sense of achievement. We know not everyone is a fan of reading. It does take a lot of time and effort to get it right, but it works for us, and the statistics reflect this. Especially when our students



pass the PISA test, reading literacy skills of our students can prove it. According to the statistics our students' results show the highest score among the other students in the country.

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Biographies

Aida Agadil has been working as a vice-principal of Department of Development at Autonomous Educational Organization «Nazarbayev Intellectual Schools» in Astana, Kazakhstan since 2020; her main professional topic is to develop Nazarbayev Intellectual School library and pastoral work methods and maintain all aspects of successful functioning of school community.

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