Encouraging pupils to read

Pupil task
- Read a book of your choice and tell your group what the book is about.
- Script a review of the book for recording in video format (two - three minutes duration).
- Make any edits you deem necessary.
- Upload the review to the Fís Book Club website (teacher controls when this can be done).
- Your book review must be approved by Fís Book Club so will not appear on the website immediately.
- View other reviews and read the books you are interested in.

What is the Fís Book Club?
The FÍS Book Club encourages Irish pupils to read age appropriate books and review them with their classmates. They then prepare a review of the book, record the review in video format using a device of their choice, and, under the supervision of their teacher, the video review is uploaded onto the Fís Book Club website. Reading and oral language skills are being developed with the meaningful integration of technology thus developing digital literacy skills. Recreational classroom reading is developed in an interesting way. The pupils will appreciate with time that this is not simply decoding print. Reading for understanding must happen in order for the child to be able to talk about what has been read – summarise the book you have read without giving the story away! “Was it interesting?” “Why?” “Would you recommend others to read it?” “What age group/class do you think it is suitable for?”

When working in pairs/small groups, some very interesting questions can be posed: “Did your partner understand your review of the book?” “Did they have to ask many questions?” “Will you change your review as a result?” This is taken to another level when reviews of the books are composed and prepared for presentation on video: “What makes a good review?” “What are the main points you want to make?” “Why is it important to speak clearly?” “Why is it important to look at the camera?” “How can you ensure that your book review will be maximum two - three minutes duration?”

Site redesign

The Fís Book Club site has been redesigned in the past year to accommodate the range of mobile and other hand-held devices teachers and pupils now have at their disposal. The re-launched online community will include varied forms of digital communications, a mix of content and a focused, educational use of modern mobile appliances.

Access/security

Membership of www.fisbookclub.ie is granted to registered Irish primary school teachers via a Scolnet account – see https://accounts.scoilnet.ie/registration – and is also subject to the school principal’s acceptance of terms and conditions for FÍS Bookclub. Note that a Scolnet account allows full access to Scolnet maps and the ability to upload resources to www.scoilnet.ie. Pupils may be given site access at the discretion of the teacher via a ‘pupil password’. However, the site can only be accessed at times the teacher enables the ‘pupil login’ function. Parents may be given site access at the discretion of the teacher via a ‘parent password’ for access anytime but with limited permissions (i.e. access to reviews from their child’s class only).

In line with the Acceptable Use Policy in the school, consent must be received from parents/guardians before uploading pupils’ video book review/storytelling report and no identifying details of the child should be contained in the video review. All uploaded video book reviews are moderated by the FÍS Book Club administrator and are only made ‘live’ for viewing when content is of an acceptable nature. FÍS Book Club is a safe password protected online community.

The new FÍS Book Club project is an initiative of the Department of Education and Skills, managed by the FÍS Office at the Institute of Art, Design and Technology (IADT) and PDST Technology in Education. A progression for a class may be to compose their own stories and storyboard them for video production … this brings us to www.fisfilmproject.ie featured in the December 2014 edition.

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