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Developing the multiple intelligences and the reading culture at the School of economics and business University of Ljubljana (Razvoj mnogoterih inteligentnosti in bralne kulture na Ekonomski fakulteti Univerze v Ljubljani)

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Abstract. The paper presents an implementation of ecoreading badge project at the School of economics and business University of Ljubljana. The aim is to motivate students to read books and think more about economic, social and environmental sustainability. Therefore, in the study year 2021/22 we selected three books dealing with changing people's minds, raising awareness of how our brains work and how it is possible to change people's mindsets for changes necessary at the global level. We present the technical implementation of webpage "meeting place" of the readers where they get relevant information about the ecoreading badge, selected books, roundtables and ambassadors of ecoreading badge. We hope our paper will provide recommendation and necessary steps to all the interested experts and professors who would like to encourage reading culture in their institutions.

1 Introduction

Intelligence is pluralistic [1]: 1) »it includes fashioning products as well as solving problems, and 2) it is defined neither on a priori basis, nor on test performances, but rather on the basis of what happens to be valued at a particular historical time in a particular cultural context«. »Rather than claiming that intelligence is the same in all times and places, recognize that human beings value different skills and capacities at various times and under varying circumstances. Indeed inventions like the printing press or the computer can alter, quite radically, the abilities that are deemed of importance (or no longer of importance) in a culture« [1]. Those who read fiction tend to have stronger mentalizing abilities, suggesting that engaging with fictional minds may strengthen this system [2]. Reading enables development of empathy. Reading books develops mentalizing system of students that is why we present in our paper a case of ecoreading club at the University of Ljubljana.

2 E-Ecoreading badge implementation

Ecoreading badge received its own webpage hosted at the library of SEB UL in 2020. The coordinators of the project are associate professor Judita Peterlin, PhD and assistant professor Tanja Istenič, PhD. Each year there

are activities for students, alumni, key stakeholders, staff and retired personnel. Aim is also to raise awareness in Slovene business terminology, therefore we also published a vocabulary in collaboration with the Slovene Academy of Management – Section for terminology (Figure 1).



Figure 1: Ecoreading badge webpage

Technical editor of Ecoreading badge, Urban Golob (13th October 2021) from the library at the School of economics and business University of Ljubljana (SEB UL) presented the ambassadors from the study year 2020/21 at the webpage of the ecoreading badge: <https://vodici.cek.ef.uni-lj.si/eko/ambasador> We give emphasis that we celebrate the books and readers as we believe in positive reinforcement, therefore students, staff and members of our academic community who read the books from our Reading club receive a certificate that they successfully finished the reading challenge. »If positive social feedback is such a strong reinforcer, why don't we use it more often to motivate employees, students, and others? (...) A kind word is worth as much to the brain in terms of rewards as a certain amount of money. (...) We don't understand the fundamentally social nature of our brains in general and the biological significance of social connection in particular. As a result, it's hard for us to conceptualize how positive social feedback will be reinforcing within the most primitive reward system of our brains.« [2].

Ecoreading badge is implemented with the support from the library and especially Mrs Marina Petan and Mr Urban Golob who are active promoters of the

Ecoreading badge in Slovene and international community: <https://efnet.si/en/2021/09/29/ecoclub/> Martina Petan sends news about efforts of Ecoreading club to all the COBISS members and also publishes news on library's webpage. Based on the book Creativity in research [3] we also organized a contest where participants in the light of multiple intelligence theory were reflecting who is the hero of their study process. In order to help students manage their study process we invited them to read the book Creativity in research [3]: and then invited them to do a developmental exercise/a reflection "Hero of my study journey" [3]: Write or sketch [1] your study story, with you as a main character: What are your characteristics? Especially for the students of the international course Management we designed a special exercise Personal research reflection paper where librarian Mrs Lidija Mancini Bolka showed students how they can access e-books available in SEB LU library and then they practiced and searched for e-books on the topics of exercises: 1) Innovative Thinking in Risk, Crisis and Disaster Management; 2) A Thousand Shades of Green: Sustainable strategies for Competitive Advantage; 3) Sustainability: Duty of Opportunity for Business; and 4) Environmental Management in European Companies: Success Stories and Evaluation.

At the beginning of the course Management in the study year 2021/22 we asked 83 students to name their favourite book. Since the students are from different countries the list of books is very unique. Only a few students selected the same book, such as Harry Potter, books from Agatha Christie. The book that was mentioned six times [4] is Rich Dad Poor Dad (Robert Kiyosaki and Sharon Lechter).



Figure 2: Wordcloud of book titles that students named as their favourite books

Students named books that we can interpret and classify into several categories, such as classic books which students had in their formal education and left good impression on them, eg. The Brothers Karamazov, Fyodor Dostoevsky; Albert Camus – The Stranger; Goethe's Faust; The Catcher in the Rye by J.D Salinger; The Great Gatsby; The Divine Comedy by Dante Alighieri; "Emma"- Jane Austen; "The Picture of

Dorian Gray" by Oscar Wilde; 1984 by George Orwell. Contemporary popular books are also one category, such as The Da Vinci Code – Dan Brown; John Ronald Reuel Tolkien: Lord of the Rings; Angels and demons by Dan Brown; Harry Potter. Some students were also impressed by the books that deal with spirituality or existential issues, such as The secret (Rhonda Byrne). Students also are interested into books that give quick tips for their financial independence, rich lifestyle and wealth, such as The psychology of money; Rich Dad Poor Dad" - Robert Kiyosaki; The Setup by Dan Bilzerian. Local authors were also mentioned from students' background, such as The bridge on Drina (Na Drini ćuprija) – Ivo Andrić; Alexey Pehov "The Guardian"; When pumpkins blossomed by Dragoslav Mihailović; "Wild meat"- Goran Stefanovski; Komo - Srđan Valjarević; To noč sem jo videl by Drago Jančar; Figa by Goran Vojnovič.

Results of the survey among our student community show that students read a lot and that they have different interests, some prefer novels, while others like to use the books as guides to help them solve their existential questions and dilemmas.

3 Selected books in the study year 2021/2022

In the study year 2021/22 we read [5] Walker, M. (2019). *Zakaj spimo: moč spanja in sanj*. Ljubljana: Mladinsko knjiga; [6] Dweck, C.S. (2017). *Mindset: changing the way you think to fulfil your potential*. London: Robinson; [7] T. Redek, T. (ed.; 2021). *Izzivi podjetij, države in družbe v uresničevanju odgovornosti za trajnostni razvoj*. Ljubljana: Ekonomska fakulteta UL.



Figure 3: Cover page of the edited book from the

researchers from SEB LU on the topic of sustainable development

E-tutor	Visits October 2020- March 2021	Visits October 2021- March 2022	Difference	Change (%)
EKO	217	641	424	195%

Figure 4: Statistics of students' visits of Ecoreading badge (source Urban Golob).

Based on the analysis implications for future work of e-tutor Management (2021) [8] benefits of Ecoreading badge are in the form of enabling students online community of passionate readers with which they can exchange opinion about the books at the roundtable or reflection contests.

We recommend to professors to advise their students on how to make the best out of their study time by reading the book Mindset [6]. The aim of giving the book Mindset [6] to students to read is to show them that the brain is like a muscle and it can get stronger when we use it and learn. When we learn new things, tiny connections in the brain multiply and get stronger. The more we challenge our mind to learn, the more our brain cells grow. Then, things that we once found hard or impossible – like speaking in front of an audience or doing algebra – seem to become easy and the result is a stronger, smarter brain. We hope that after reading the book Mindset [6] students will learn study skills and apply the lessons of the growth mindset to their studying. We recommend the following exercise from the book Mindset (p. 238) [6] for our management students: *“Think of something you need to do, something you want to learn, or a problem you have to confront. What is it? Now make a concrete plan. When will you follow through on your plan? Where will you do it? How will you do it? Think about it in vivid detail. These concrete plans - plans you can visualize - about when, where, and how you are going to do something lead to really high levels of follow-through, which, of course, increases the chances of success. The idea is not only to make a growth-mindset plan, but also to visualize, in a concrete way, how you are going to carry it out”* [6].

Dweck [6] developed in collaboration with educational, media and brain experts the interactive computer modules program “Brainology” based on the growth oriented mindset. The program teaches learners about the brain, how to take care of it and how the brain grows as we learn. The interactive portions allow students to do brain experiments, see videos of real students with their problems and study strategies, recommend study plans and keep a journal of their own problems and study plans [6].

Dweck’s research [6] and own experiences show that reading the book Mindset [6] does not only influence students but teaching staff, as well. Teachers see that all students can learn, become more patient with students who struggle, realize that learning takes a great deal of time and practice, receive support/argumentation for teaching for various learning styles.

“Mindset change asks people to give this up. As you can imagine, it’s not easy to just let go of something that has felt like your “self” for many years and that has given you your route to self-esteem. And it’s especially not easy to replace it with a mindset that tells you to embrace all the things that have felt threatening: challenge, struggle, criticism, setbacks” [6].

In order to invite readers into environmental topics we also share favourite books from passionate readers from our academic community who also role as ambassadors of spreading reading culture among our stakeholders (Figure 4):



Figure 4: Ambassadors of ecoreading badge

We invest effort with library staff and stakeholders to invite students to related events, discussions, roundtables that complement reading books (Figure 5):



Figure 5: Reading books and acting in the wider environment

Roundtable in the study year 2021/22 was due to COVID-19 pandemics online with a lively discussion among professors, practitioners and students (Figure 6).

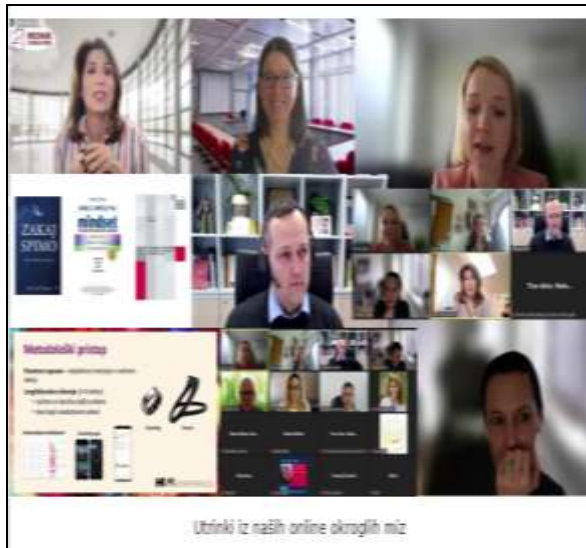


Figure 6: Roundtable in February 2022

4 Conclusion

»The lifelong learner needs to know how to monitor changes in relevant domains. Such monitoring can be done in part by talking to others, in part by observing them, but it typically involves as well more targeted searches through the printed literature, the relevant websites, the offerings of adult »continuing education« institutions« [1] (Gardner, 2006, p. 147). It is with the aim of promoting multiple intelligences [9] [10] [11] [12] [13] [14] and reading culture that we invest our time and energy into promoting books on the topic of sustainable development. Besides offering books we also want to develop a community that talks about the lessons learned from the books and what impact they have on our lives.

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