Winning or losing a generation

Gerald Leitner
CEO Austrian Library Association
EBLIDA President
illiterates, a growing nation
Children of 11 cannot spell simplest of words

by LAURA CLARK, Daily Mail

Last updated at 09:38 28 Januar 2006

Children’s spelling ability has declined despite a multi-millionpound drive to improve literacy standards.

Pupils made more errors in last year’s national English tests for 11-year-olds than they did in 2004, seven years into the Government’s flagship strategy.

An analysis of scripts reveals youngsters misspelt nearly half the words in a list of 20, a rise in errors on the previous year.

They even tripped up on basic words such as ‘washing’ and ‘before’.

Yet pupils could misspell these words and still pass the English test if they picked up enough marks in other sections of the exam to compensate.

Ministers trumpeted an increase in the proportion of 11-year-olds passing the English test from 78 per cent in 2004 to 79 per cent.

But the exam is made up of several parts, including reading, writing and spelling. An analysis by the Government’s exam watchdog suggests the overall improvement masked a deterioration in spelling performance.
'Unacceptably high' number of adults can't read

By Mark Ellis, Education Correspondent 29/01/2009

An "unacceptably high" number of adults cannot read, write or add up, MPs were warned yesterday. Despite £5billion spent on teaching basic skills in the past eight years there are 5.2 million adults in England with poor English and 6.8 million struggle with maths.

A report by the Commons Public Accounts Committee said tackling the problem is essential if England is to remain competitive in the global economy.

In 2003, an estimated 75 per cent of England's working age population had numeracy skills below the level of a good GCSE, and 56 per cent had literacy skills below this level.

Committee chairman Edward Leigh said: "This is a dismal picture."
A third of boys don't read

Published: 02 Jul 2003

A THIRD of teen boys never read outside school, a poll revealed yesterday. And only one in five of those who do actually pick up a book. The rest look at lads’ mags and emails. The Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development warned the “worrying” trend is linked to boys underperforming at school. Almost 36 per cent of 15-year-old boys never read at home, while only one in 13 spends at least an hour reading for fun. Seventy per cent flick through a magazine and 55 per cent check emails. Meanwhile, British kids slipped in a world education league table. Of 43 countries, the UK was ninth for maths, eighth for literacy and fifth for science? all one place lower than 2002.
Four out of 10 kids can't read

By ONLINE REPORTER
Published: 07 Aug 2007

FOUR out of 10 children left primary school this year without being able to read or write, Government figures show today.

Just 60 per cent of the 585,000 11-year-olds who sat national curriculum tests this year reached Level 4 in reading, writing and arithmetic, the figures show.

It means more than 230,000 pupils fell short of the standard expected of the age group. Of the total,
Are German pupils stupid?
Leseschwäche nimmt in EU deutlich zu


PISA (Programme for International Student Assessment)

- OECD (Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development)
- Measures the skills of 15-year-olds
- Measures reading, mathematical, and scientifical literacy
- Since 2000, every 3 years in 30 OECD countries and other participating countries
OECD/PISA definition of reading literacy

„Reading literacy is understanding, using and reflecting on written texts, in order to achieve one‘s goals, to develop one‘s knowledge and potential and to participate in society.“
Reading skills by international comparison

OECD median (494)

median

significant better

no significant difference

significant worse

source: PISA 2003
Reading literacy levels

High-risk group
- Below Level 1: very difficult reading tasks
- Level 1: basic reading tasks
- Level 2: easy reading tasks
- Level 3: medium reading tasks
- Level 4: difficult reading tasks
- Level 5: very difficult reading tasks

Average readers

Excellent readers
Allocation on levels including high-risk groups – OECD comparison

Source: PISA 2006
Paradigm shift

• Shift of focus from developing countries to industrial countries

→ reading weaknesses are perceived as a significant social problem of the industrial countries

• Shift of the debate from culture to economy

→ It’s no longer about an education canon, but about economical harm or benefit
Implications for libraries

• Don‘t ignore the paradigm shift
• Evaluate your offers and services
• Identify weaknesses/shortcomings
• Develop new attractive offers and services
• React on the paradigm shift with your argumentation
• Orient your work at best-practices
Successful products need:

- A highly qualitative product
- Effective marketing

proper combination!
Austria: some facts

- 8.2 mio inhabitants
- ~ 2,500 libraries
- OECD wealth ranking: 7th
- 4th richest country in the EU
- No library law
- OECD PISA study: 19th rank
Nobel Prize in Literature – Elfriede Jelinek
Reading Skills

20% of young Austrians:
- Cannot qualify for a number of professions
- Cannot be reached with written information
- Can hardly take part of political discussions
→ thus, are vulnerable to radical political positions!
PISA and the libraries

• Measures were so far concentrating on schools only

• Libraries were rarely an issue of education debates
PISA and the libraries

- PISA has shown:
  - massive lacks in reading skills of young people
  - but also:
  - a serious awareness deficit of Austrian libraries
Austria‘s nationwide campaign

- Promotion of reading
- Improving public awareness of libraries
Key aspects

• Nation-wide literature festival

➔ Austria's biggest literature festival

• Effective PR campaign
Austria Reads.
Meeting Point Library
Posters
Promotion material

- T-shirts
- Bags
- Balloons
- Bookmarks
Patronage

The Federal President of Austria, Dr. Heinz Fischer
Funding

• Federal Ministry for Education, Arts and Culture
• All Austrian federal states
• Participating libraries
• Sponsored by business companies
Mobilization and motivation

- Numerous publications + periodical direct mailings to all public libraries
- Website, inter alia offering information about event management
- Numerous conferences
- Foundation of the “Reading Academy“: offering workshops in all federal states

➡ Improving of the quality
„Für mich gehört Lesen zum guten Ton“
Anna Netrebko

Österreich liest Treffpunkt Bibliothek
www.oesterreichliest.at
„Lesen heißt gewinnen“
Benni Raich

Österreich liest
Treffpunkt Bibliothek
www.oesterreichliest.at

Gefördert vom bmuk
„Ich fliege auf Bibliotheken“

Toni Innauer
Sportdirektor Skisprung und Kombinierer

Österreich liest Treffpunkt Bibliothek
www.oesterreichliest.at
„Lesen gibt mir den Kick fürs Leben“

Josef Hickersberger

Österreich liest Treffpunkt Bibliothek
www.oesterreichliest.at
„Lesen bedeutet, neue Welten zu entdecken“

Mag. Brigitte Ederer

Österreich liest
Treffpunkt Bibliothek
www.oesterreichliest.at
„Bibliotheken sichern allen Menschen freien Zugang zu Bildung“

Mag. Franz Voves
Landeshauptmann der Steiermark

Österreich liest Treffpunkt Bibliothek
www.oesterreichliest.at
„Jedes Buch birgt einen Schatz“

Bürgermeister
Dr. Michael Häupl

Österreich liest
Treffpunkt Bibliothek
www.oesterreichliest.at
„Bibliotheken sind ein Segen“

Erzbischof Dr. Alois Kothgasser

Österreich liest Treffpunkt Bibliothek
www.oesterreichliest.at
ICE 744 „Österreich liest. Treffpunkt Bibliothek“

- From Vienna to Salzburg
- From Eastern Austria to the West
Austria Reads on TV

• 30“ TVC on ORF, the Austrian national broadcasting channel, during prime time in the two weeks before the campaign
International cooperations

• In 2008, numerous „Österreich-Bibliotheken“ abroad participated in the campaign

• 2008: „Germany Reads. Meeting Point Library“

• 2010: „Switzerland Reads. Meeting Point Library“
„Austria Reeds. Meeting point library“

• high quality product

• self created professional PR campaign
Austrian state award for Public Relations
„Austria Reeds. Meeting point library“

• Austria´s biggest literature festival

• valuable marketing tool
  • thematises the situation of libraries
  • lobbying for libraries

➔ For the **first time** libraries in the government program
Thank you for your attention!